

PRESENT DAY TRACTS

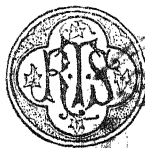
ON

The Higher Criticism

BY

THE VERY REVS. R. PAYNE-SMITH, D.D., AND THE
LATE J. S. HOWSON, D.D., THE REVS. PRINCIPAL
WACE, D.D., PROF. A. B. BRUCE, D.D., AND
PROF. F. GODET D.D.

Containing Six Tracts of the Series, Nos. 15, 16, 24, 26, 32, 35.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

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PREFACE.

THE numbers of the Present Day Series bearing upon the authorship, authenticity, and credibility of the principal books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are assailed by the so-called "HIGHER CRITICISM," are brought together in this Volume. They are arranged in the natural order of the subjects, and not in the order of the appearance of the Tracts in the Series. The convenience of this plan for readers specially interested in these important discussions will be apparent to every one.

It may appear superfluous to maintain the authenticity of the Four Principal Epistles of St. Paul, which are admitted to be genuine by the most eminent scholars of every school of criticism; but there are advocates of the less cultured forms of unbelief who will not consent to argue on the assumption of the Pauline authorship of these important books. For the sake of those who are under the influence of these writers and lecturers it is needful to issue a clear, intelligible, and popular statement of the evidence which appears to be irresistible alike to orthodox and rationalistic scholars.

A Tract on this subject is also needed by those who would never think of disputing the justice of the existing consensus of opinion, but who naturally desire to know the

grounds on which the agreement rests, and have not time to read large books and treatises.

A fitting companion to this Tract is the one on the "Evidential Conclusions from the Four Greater Epistles of St. Paul." Dr. Godet indicates these briefly in his Tract on their Authenticity. They are drawn out at greater length in the Tract by the late Dean Howson, which appeared at a much earlier period in the history of the PRESENT DAY SERIES, but forms the fitting conclusion of this Volume.

The great importance of the other Tracts, particularly those on the Pentateuch and the Fourth Gospel, will be recognised by every one acquainted with the discussions that are taking place.

It is confidently believed that this Special Volume will meet a widespread need, as the two former ones, viz., *THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD* and *THE NON-CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHIES OF THE AGE*," have done. These groups of Tracts are thus made more readily available for the use of teachers and others who are interested in special branches of *CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS*.

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By THE LATE J. S. HOWSON, D.D.

THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

AND

CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF

"PROPHECY, A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST (*Bampton Lecture*, 1869);"
"THE AUTHENTICITY AND MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHECIES OF
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(SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY), ETC.



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164, PICCADILLY.

Argument of the Tract.

THE author first shows that the writer of the Pentateuch displays an exact knowledge of the customs and topography of Chaldea, Canaan, Egypt, and the Desert of the Wandering, (in all which countries our knowledge has of late been greatly increased by the decyphering of cuneiform and Egyptian inscriptions, and by the work of the Ordnance Survey of the Wilderness and of the Palestine Exploration Fund, with the result in all cases of confirming the Biblical narrative); and that Moses alone possessed this vast and accurate knowledge. He next shows that the position of the tribe of Levi was so inferior to that of the rest in all worldly advantages that it is inconceivable that they should have submitted to it unless they had in compensation religious and spiritual prerogatives. He also gives reasons for the partial observance of the Mosaic Law in Palestine; and proves that its promulgation would have been impossible at any and every period after the conquest. Finally, he combats the theory that though the Pentateuch was Mosaic, the three legal codes contained in it were of late and varying dates, by showing that it is destitute of proof and contrary to facts.

THE MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP

AND

CREDIBILITY OF THE PENTATEUCH.



THE question of the authorship of the Books of the Old Testament is usually one of secondary importance until we reach the prophetic writings. Even of all the Old Testament Scriptures we may say that as regards our faith little depends upon their human origin. For if they are what they claim to be, they are a message from God to our souls. Many, of course, deny this claim; it is, they say, a thing impossible. God never has, and never could, speak to man. But if He has spoken to man—and for believing this there are many valid reasons—no books have so manifest a claim to be His words as those of the Bible. Their human authorship, therefore, sinks into insignificance compared with the momentous question whether they are a revelation of God's will to man. And it is worth observing that the writers themselves attached no value to the part they had taken in the

The Books of the Old Testament a message from God to our souls.

The human authorship a matter of comparative insignificance.

The authors
of the sacred
books do not
obtrude
themselves.

matter. There is no pride of authorship about them. They usually make no reference to themselves, but are solely occupied with the great message which they were commissioned to bear.

The art of
writing in
its infancy
when they
were
written.

No doubt one reason of this reticence on the part of the writers is the extreme antiquity of the Scriptures. The earlier books were composed when the art of writing was in its infancy, when writing materials were of the simplest kind, and when but few persons could either make records of events, or read them when recorded. And it is a well-established law of the Holy Scriptures that in their outward form they were subject to the conditions of the times when they were written.

The Bible
a book of
miracle.

The Bible is a book of miracle, in which from time to time, at rare and distant intervals, God suspends the ordinary course of nature for some special purpose, as a "sign" to men. For this is the correct translation of the word used in the Old and New Testaments to express these extraordinary

The writers
not lifted
out of the
state of
things in
which they
lived.

interpositions of God's power. But there is never anything magical in the Bible, and the writers of its many books are never lifted out of the moral and mental state of things among which they lived; nor are their intellectual endowments or physical qualities changed. Jeremiah naturally possessed no gift of genius, or skill in oratory; inspiration did not give them. He did possess high moral qualities, and these, sanctified by God's Spirit,

Their moral
and other
qualities
sanctified.

made him one of the foremost of the prophets. St. Paul was subject apparently to a physical infirmity which compelled him to dictate his epistles to a scribe. There is naturally in them the vivacity of style usual in spoken discourses, but with the usual drawback, that the logical connexion is mental, and that to understand them we must study the course of St. Paul's thoughts.

In the Old Testament many of our modern difficulties arise from the demand, unconsciously often made, that everything should be in accordance with nineteenth century advancement. But the gift of inspiration, and the watchful care of the Spirit that in the historical books the subjects selected and the method of treating them should be for the edification of the Church, did not raise the writers above the conditions of their own times. And in this matter of authorship we find, when we turn to the *Records of the Past*,¹ translated from Egyptian, Ninevite, and Babylonian sources, that the writers seldom refer to themselves. The older books of the Bible follow the same rule, in which nevertheless we recognize something providential. For it ought to lead us to think more of Him whose word it is, than of the human hand which wrote it.

The source
of many
modern
difficulties.

In course of time an interest gradually grew up in this question, and we find in the uninspired

The growth
of interest
in the
question of
the human
authorship.

¹ Translated by Birch, Rawlinson, Sayce, and others. London.

Importance
of the
question of
the human
authorship
of the Book
of Isaiah
and of the
Pentateuch.

Modern
criticism
makes the
most of the
difficulties
found in the
Pentateuch.

The whole
Pentateuch
ascribed to
Moses.

The veracity
of Holy
Scripture
involved in
the Mosaic
authorship.

headings prefixed to a large number of the Psalms, an attempt made to settle their date and authorship. And occasionally the matter has become one of large importance, because of the course of modern criticism. It is a question of great value in our days, whether the Book of Isaiah is an anthology made up of fragments, culled from lost works composed by numerous writers, or the composition of one man. And so with the Pentateuch. Modern criticism has made the most of all the difficulties necessarily found in connexion with a book of such extreme antiquity. It has used these difficulties to discredit the book, and even to tear it to pieces, and assign the fragments to a host of nameless persons. But though Moses himself followed the same impersonal manner as was usual with all primitive writers, yet there is in Exodus xxiv. 4 the assertion that Moses wrote all the laws at that time given, and, as we think, in the Book of Deuteronomy words which ascribe to him the whole Pentateuch. If this interpretation be correct, it becomes no mere archæological question, as might be that of the authorship of the Books of Judges or of Samuel. The veracity of Holy Scripture is at stake; and besides this, the authorship of Moses, for which there is ample proof, gives a solid foundation for the genuineness of all the Old Testament Scriptures. If there be strong and

abundant evidence for this conclusion, most of the remaining difficulties, debated so warmly, sink into minor importance.

Let me first state what is the testimony of the Pentateuch itself as to its authorship. We find, then, in Deuteronomy xxxi. 24-27, the statement that "when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion," etc. Now, we must not conceal the fact that great diversity of opinion exists as to the meaning of "the words of this law." Some commentators consider that it refers only to the Book of Deuteronomy, and point out in support of their view that the reason alleged for thus giving the Israelites the words of the law in writing, is the fact that they had always been so rebellious in their conduct, and had so resisted the introduction of the Mosaic institutions among them. And, undeniably, it is the case that the more kindly and social side of the Mosaic law is pointed out in the Book of Deuteronomy, and the effort made to commend it to the affections of the people. It is equally the case that, until the return from the exile at Babylon, the Israelites

The testimony of the Pentateuch to its authorship.

Diversity of opinion as to the meaning of "the words of this law."

Deuteronomy a recapitulation of the chief points of the law.

were by no means zealous for their law, and gave it at most a half-hearted obedience. Again, other commentators consider that it was only such a summary of the law as the kings were commanded to copy out each for himself (Deut. xvii. 18); or such a summary as was to be written very plainly upon stones covered with plaister, set up on Mount Ebal, and which also is called, "all the words of this law" (xxvii. 3). Finally, others hold that Deuteronomy was strictly no part of the law. For it consists of addresses made to Israel when, at the end of their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, they were finally mustered for the conquest of Palestine. During a large portion of this long period the mass of the people had been dispersed throughout the wilderness, then a comparatively well-watered land, occupied with the pasturing of their herds. But as the time drew near for the conquest of Canaan, Moses gathered them to him at his head-quarters at Kadesh (Num. xx. 1; xxxiii. 36), and naturally recapitulated to them the chief points of their law, and tried to commend it to their allegiance.

Facts corroborative of this view.

In support of this, which seems the most probable view, we must further point out that Moses renewed the covenant with the people, when on their march they had reached the borders of the land of Moab (Deut. xxix. 1). And nothing could be more probable and reasonable than such a pro-

ceeding. For the generation had passed away with whom the covenant had been made in Horeb, and for the mass of the people dispersed far and wide in the wilderness, the Mosaic law had practically been in abeyance. It was intended for the Israelites when settled in a land of their own, and until then it was impossible to keep it. Thus they were not even circumcised (Josh. v. 5), and offered no sacrifices (Amos v. 25). These addresses, therefore, of which the Book of Deuteronomy consists, were of the highest practical value and usefulness, but were not the law. They were intended to bring back the hearts of the people to the law, to renew their acquaintance with it, and to prepare the way for its observance when, upon the conquest of Canaan, the time had come for practising it.

The purpose
of the
Mosaic law.

The practical value
and
intention of
the addresses
in Deuteronomy.

Very probably, like the Song of Moses in chap. xxxii., and his blessing in chap. xxxiii., the three addresses were left in separate documents, and placed together after his death. The use of the word "book," Hebrew *sepher*, in chap. xxxi. 24, 26, implies that the material employed was some preparation of the skins of animals, and Herodotus tells us that the Phœnicians were the first to employ skins in this way (Herod. v. 58). As he adds that many barbarous tribes still used such skins, it is evident that they were but roughly prepared, and were unworthy of the name of parchment, which was first invented at Pergamos, many ages

Materials
used in
writing.

Moses had
the means
of writing.

after this time. As we find a Hittite town, assigned after the conquest to the tribe of Judah, called Kirjath-Sepher (Josh. xv. 15), we gather that the Hittites were versed in the art of thus preparing skins; and with this agrees the fact that the Khita or Hittites constantly appear in Egyptian monuments, long before and during the age of Moses, as accomplished scribes. Moses would have no difficulty in obtaining this writing material, or even the knowledge of the method of preparing it, which must have been brought to Egypt by many members of this nation. There is therefore no difficulty in the command given to Moses, to write a memorial of events in the *sepher*, the skin on which a record was kept by him of events (Exod. xvii. 14); nor in the halting places of the Israelites being registered in a similar way (Numb. xxxiii. 2). For, however simple and primitive may have been the writing materials elsewhere spoken of (Deut. xxvii. 2, 3), Moses possessed in the skins of animals an abundant and convenient article; and prepared even as they were for the covering of the ark, for which they were made capable of taking a dye (Exod. xxxix. 34), they would not be unfit for writing upon, especially as the ink was thick and glutinous, and painted upon the skin with a reed.

The
addresses
contained in
Deuteronomy
probably
left by
Moses as
separate
documents.

Most probably, therefore, the addresses which form the Book of Deuteronomy, and which were spoken to the people at the very close of Moses'

life, were left by him as separate documents, each written on its own roll of skin. And in a similar manner the Song of Moses, and the Blessing of the Tribes, both of which were probably written by Moses during the long halt at Kadesh, would each be copied upon a skin by itself.

The Song of
Moses and
the Blessing
of the tribes
also
separate

Now, the first thirty chapters of Deuteronomy consist of these three addresses, placed one after another; but, beginning at chap. xxxi., we have a history of the last days of the great legislator's life, written, as the manuscripts of the Syriac version assert, by Joshua. The tradition is at least probable, though really it matters little who wrote this narrative; but it does not profess to have been written by Moses, and chap. xxxiv. could not have been so written. Chaps. xxxii. and xxxiii. contain the two hymns, which attest the greatness of Moses as a poet, and chap. xxxiv. gives the history of his death. Now, any one who will carefully consider the nature of the contents of the Book of Deuteronomy as thus pointed out, will see that "the words of this law" would be the four first books of the Pentateuch; and though we thus divide them into four books, the Jews did not do so until late times. The Pentateuch with them was one undivided whole. For to what Moses left behind him was immediately added the Book of Deuteronomy, written equally by his hand, except the historical xxxi. and xxxiv. chapters, but not

Joshua
probably
wrote the
account of
the last days
of Moses.

"The words
of this law"
were the
first four
books of the
Pentateuch.

The
Pentateuch
with the
Jews an
undivided
whole.

strictly forming the Book of the Law, though many legal enactments are recapitulated in it. And the assertion that Moses himself wrote the law, and commanded his autograph copy to be laid up by the side of the ark, is made not by Moses himself, which would have been contrary to the customs of those primitive times, but by those who obediently carried out his command, and who as being charged with this duty would also gather his final addresses together, and complete the record by the history of their leader's last acts and of his death.

The antecedent assumption of the Mosaic authorship founded on the nature of its contents.

Having thus cleared the ground, we will next proceed to show that the antecedent presumption is in favour of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, not merely because of the tradition in its favour, and the external authority which might be adduced, but because of the nature of its contents. No book of the Bible covers so vast a field, either of time or of country. Confining ourselves to the latter point, we find the cradle of the human race placed in Babylonia, and at length we are able to compare the Biblical narrative with legends and tales, wonderfully preserved there unto this day. From the regions watered by the Euphrates we next are led with Abraham to the uplands of Canaan, whence the history takes us into Egypt at repeated intervals; and finally, we accompany the Israelites during a wandering of forty years in

the deserts of Sinai. It is a peculiar privilege of the days in which we live that our knowledge of all these countries is greatly increased by the decipherment of writings of vast antiquity, which had long remained hidden from human sight under the mounds which mark the sites of the ruined cities of Assyria. We are no longer dependent upon stories and traditions narrated to us by Greek travellers in Babylonia of a comparatively late date, but have in our museums, inscribed on cylinders and tablets of clay, the literature of the nations who of old inhabited these ancient lands. Some of these documents are said by Mr. Sayce (*Chaldean Genesis*, p. 24), to be far older than the time of Abraham; while in addition to them we possess translations of writings in the language of Accad (Gen. x. 10), made at a time when that town was passing out of memory, for the libraries of Assyrian kings, and which, even in this form, are themselves anterior to the Christian era by six or seven centuries.

Great increase of our knowledge of all the countries referred to in the Pentateuch.

These writings are, as a rule, childish polytheistic and full of fable, but it is remarkable that they cover much the same ground as the earlier narratives of the Book of Genesis. Thus we have legends of Creation, of the Paradise, of the Tree of Life, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel; and moreover, from Senkereh, the ancient Larsa, there has been brought and deposited in the British

The generally childish and fabulous character of the writings that have been discovered.

The close parallelism between the old Chaldean legends and the first chapters of Genesis.

The legends utterly debased before the Jews were again brought into connection with Chaldea.

Museum a historical cylinder, supposed to belong to the eighteenth century before our era, in which are detailed the exploits of Kudur-Mabuk, a king of Elann, who carried his conquering arms not only into Babylonia but into Palestine, and to the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. By this document extraordinary light is thrown upon the history of Chedorlaomer (Kudur-Lagomar), who was apparently his successor, and who invaded Canaan to replace upon the nations there the yoke of Kudur-Mabuk. But the interest for us lies in the close parallelism between these old Chaldean legends and the first few chapters of the Book of Genesis. Now it was not until very late in their history that the Jews, by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, were once again brought into contact with the Chaldeans; and naturally we find in the writings of Ezekiel, the prophet of that period, an intimate acquaintance with Chaldean symbolism. But though the assertion has been made, that the code of law found in the Book of Leviticus belongs to the time of Ezekiel, it would be futile to attempt to bring down the age of the Pentateuch generally to this date. For the Chaldean legends, long before this had become hopelessly debased, and it would have been impossible to divest them of their mythology, and frame from them a narrative so grand, and even scientifically correct, though written in popular language, as the history

of creation. We know, moreover, that confessedly most of the Pentateuch then existed much as we have it now; and considerable portions of the Book of Ezekiel are occupied with enactments which were either to explain or to supersede the Levitical law. Especially he described a new arrangement of the territory of Palestine, in which the Levites were no longer to be left without their share of the country; but while the priests had the land immediately round the temple, they were to have a broad region lying between the portion of the priests and that assigned to the tribe of Judah. But if the attempt would be hopeless to assign these early chapters of Genesis to the time of Ezekiel, there is absolutely no one but Moses who could have penned them.

Most of the Pentateuch then existed as we have it now.

Only Moses could have penned them.

For they are an integral portion of a consistent narrative of which the one object is the growth of the family of Abraham into a nation. The history finds Abraham dwelling among these Chaldeans, and himself of their stock. The primary purpose of the previous chapters is to give us Abraham's genealogy, and to show that he was the direct representative of Shem, and through him of Seth, the son of Adam, to whom belonged by divine decree the right of primogeniture. And with this right of primogeniture certain promises are bound up, which explain the reason of Abraham's call, and the purpose for which his descendants were

The purpose of the narrative.

to be formed into a separate people. It was perfectly natural, and even necessary, for Moses, when tracing Israel's origin and growth, to carry the history of their progenitor back to the very first. But who besides Moses could have traced it through a series of what had degenerated into Chaldean fables? Nor are there any remains of this genealogy in the legends as we now find them.

The Mosaic
authorship
explains
everything.

Accept the Mosaic authorship, and all falls easily into its place. Abraham, the highest born of the whole Semitic stock, is described as dwelling at Ur, a large and wealthy town, the chief seaport upon the Persian Gulf, though now left far inland by the deposit of the silt brought down by the Euphrates from the highlands of Armenia. The place was originally peopled by the Accadians, a race descended from Japheth, and who are proved by the large remains of their literature to have been a wealthy, learned, and highly civilized people. The cuneiform method of writing seems to have been their invention, and clay their ordinary, though by no means their only writing material. Papyrus¹ was used by them at a very early date; and so common was the use of writing, that all the ordinary transactions of business were carefully recorded, and numerous tablets in our museums refer to matters of the most insignificant kind.

But when Abraham appears they had already

¹ *Journal Bibl. Archæol.* i. 144 iii. 430.

been conquered by the Chaldeans, a Semitic race of the same family as Abraham himself. And in process of time, not only Abraham, but his father Terah, and a powerful section of the clan of Eber, leave Ur, and settle in Haran, a town on the ordinary route to Palestine, and through which Kudur-Mabuk must have passed on his way to the conquest of that country, at the very time when Terah and his sons were dwelling there. Now, why did Terah and his family leave Ur? The reason distinctly was a religious one,¹ and no reasonable doubt can be cast upon the assertion that the difference between Abraham and the Chaldees lay in his being a worshipper of one God, while they worshipped many. Nor can we find any explanation of the monotheism of Abraham and his clan so simple and reasonable as that given by his possession of such histories as those contained in the earlier chapters of Genesis. The sublime narrative of creation, setting it forth as the work of one God, who commanded only and it was done, would alone have been a powerful preservative against the belief in a motley crowd of deities. Even in the Babylonian legend of creation, we still find traces of this grand conception in the statement that there was a time when the gods² had not been called into being. This sounds very much like a faint echo of the

The migration of Terah and his clan.

The reason of it religious.

The explanation of the monotheism of Abraham to be found in his possession of the primitive histories.

¹ Gen. xii. 1 ; xv. 7.

² *Chald. Gen.*, p. 56.

to be formed into a separate people. It was perfectly natural, and even necessary, for Moses, when tracing Israel's origin and growth, to carry the history of their progenitor back to the very first. But who besides Moses could have traced it through a series of what had degenerated into Chaldean fables? Nor are there any remains of this genealogy in the legends as we now find them.

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Abraham
the natural
depository
of the
Divinely
given
knowledge
of the ante-
diluvian and
patriarchal
world.

The
documents
possessed
and used by
Moses.

The pure
faith
propagated
by Abraham
and his
brethren.

Residence at
Haran
became
impossible
by reason of
prevailing
idolatry.

opening words of Genesis, that "in the beginning God made the heaven and the earth." Abraham, as the direct representative of Shem, would be the natural depository of whatever knowledge God had given either to the antediluvian or the patriarchal world. And this knowledge, carefully guarded and preserved as a most precious deposit, would account for the pure faith of Abraham and the family to which he belonged. These documents Moses would use under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit; but it would have been impossible for any one, without miraculous intervention, to pen narratives which run so exactly alongside the Chaldean legends, unless he had possessed the records, of which the legends are the debased form.

It is evident from their literature that not only the Accadians, but their Chaldean conquerors at Ur, were idolaters, though probably retaining vestiges of a purer creed. And Abraham¹ and his brethren would certainly endeavour to propagate—at all events among their Semitic kinsmen—the nobler faith which they had inherited. Nor would such an effort be altogether without success. But we gather from the departure of Terah and his family from wealthy and civilized Ur to a place so exposed to danger as Haran, that finally it became impossible for them to continue there. They could not join in idolatrous worship; probably,

¹ Compare Gen. xviii. 19; xxxv. 2, 3.

too, they were teachers and active propagators of tenets destructive of the religions around them. There were attractions, moreover, for their own dependents, and even for themselves (Josh. xxiv. 2), in the rites and ceremonies, the feasts and holy days of the people among whom they dwelt. And so God called them away to regions where the purity of their faith would no longer be imperilled.

The Divine
call to leave
it.

In the departure of Terah from Ur, we have the dividing line of these legends. Abraham carried them with him first to Haran, and then to Canaan in their pure form. At Ur and in Chaldea they degenerated into puerile fables. Inscribed even on tablets of clay they would not be cumbrous to carry. Abraham was at the head of a powerful clan, and carried large wealth with him. While at Haran Terah and his family seem to have engaged in trade,¹ for which the place was admirably suited, and at Ur they had lived among a people too advanced in civilization for them to be indifferent to knowledge. But we have seen that though clay was the cheapest, yet that other more costly writing materials were in use, and Abraham, when abandoning so much for religious reasons, would carry with him as a prized possession the records of his faith, especially as they belonged to him as being, in the direct line of primogeniture, the representative of the priesthood of Shem.

The
migration
from Ur the
dividing line
of the
traditions.

The pure
form
retained by
Abraham.

At Ur they
degenerated
into fables.

¹ Gen. xii. 5.

The
preservation
of the
records.

Their preservation from this time to the age of Moses was a matter of course, and he would make such use of them and of other patriarchal records as was dictated to him by the guidance of the Spirit of God. But their continued preservation until late times would be most improbable. Even if carried into the wilderness and laid up with the ark at Shiloh, they would scarcely have escaped destruction at the hands of the Philistines. Samuel would no doubt save all that he could. Many a record of former days was probably rescued by him; but even if he had rescued these old memorials, that which next follows agrees with the authorship of Moses, but negatives the idea that Samuel could have compiled the Pentateuch.

Abraham's
wandering
life, and his
life in
Egypt.

For we are next brought into contact partly with the life of a wandering Arab sheik and partly with Egypt. Now, the customs of life change so little in the East that the ideas and principles which underlie the conduct of Abraham and his successors are much the same as those of an Arab tribe in the present day. They are described with the most thorough fidelity, but it is the exact knowledge of Egypt which claims Moses as the writer of those portions of Genesis and Exodus which belong to that country. Moses in the Egyptian narratives given in the Book of Genesis still seems to have had written records before him. The whole of Genesis is arranged in a series of "books of generations,"

The
descriptions
of life and
the
underlying
principles of
Abraham's
conduct
thoroughly
faithful and
true to
Eastern life
to-day.

The
arrangement
of Genesis.

or genealogical narratives. Moses, of course, would have possessed the materials for these histories, but again their preservation to later times would have been difficult; and we can see no reason why Genesis should have been thus arranged in a series of genealogies except the fact that when Moses became the ruler of Israel, all the archives of the race came to be at his disposal. Oriental nations generally attach great importance to genealogies, and carefully record them; but there was more than mere tribal pride that required that Israel's genealogy should be faithfully preserved. Everywhere in the Bible there is the most careful preparation for the genealogy of our Lord.

The only
sufficient
reason for it.

Nothing, too, was more natural than that the man who had been the head and leader in Israel's exodus from Egypt, and whose office it was to form it into a nation, should give its history from the very first. He was brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians, he lived in a great crisis of his people's history, he had himself been the prime mover in noble deeds, and whatever archives and documents existed belonging to the race, would be in his custody. He had abundant leisure in the wilderness at Kadesh, and we can well imagine the interest with which he would study the wonderful records of the past. No man had such a call upon him to show who Israel was, and what were the covenant rights of the race, as the

Natural
that Moses,
the leader
of the
Exodus,
should write
the history.

No one had
such a call
to write the
history as
Moses.

hero who was leading them to Canaan to win those rights by the sword. He had to justify their war of conquest; he had to ennoble the people, and teach them who and what they were; and he had to make them worthy to fulfil the high destiny of a family in whom, as he taught, all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Never had man such a call upon him to write the origins of a nation as Moses, and no one can read the Pentateuch without feeling that Israel's mission and holy calling, and the blessing contained within it for all mankind were motives strong and urgent and all-constraining and ever-present in the writer's mind.

Moses the actor as well as writer, from Exodus to the end of the Pentateuch.

Egypt and the Desert of Sinai.

Points confirmatory of the Mosaic authorship.

From Exodus to the end of the Pentateuch we have done with generations, family records and patriarchal memorials, and Moses is the great actor, and as we believe the narrator also. And here we have two regions, Egypt and the Desert of Sinai. Now, not only is all that is told us of Egypt confirmed by our largely-increased knowledge of the country, but there are special points strongly confirmatory of the view that the writer of the Exodus had a personal acquaintance with the land. Thus the plagues of Egypt are found generally to be based upon natural phenomena, happening usually at long intervals, but which came with intensified force one after another, blow upon blow, until Egypt was crushed by them; while finally the

smiting of the firstborn was a proof that they were no mere natural phenomena, but the manifestation of God's presence in judgment. But this knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian customs and phenomena is now generally granted. There are indeed still points where there is room for rival theories. There is not an absolute agreement as to the Pharaoh in whose days Joseph was taken down into Egypt, nor as to the route followed by Israel at its departure. But the limits of diversity of opinion are being rapidly narrowed; and as regards the route, the difficulty mainly arises from the changes in the land wrought naturally during the space of three thousand years.

The writer's knowledge of Egypt generally granted.

Divergence of view on some points.

As regards the wilderness of Sinai the case used to be different. It was supposed that the history of the wanderings of Israel there was at variance with the topography of the country. Even Professor Robertson Smith says that "the Pentateuch displays an exact topographical knowledge of Canaan, but by no means so exact a knowledge of the wilderness of the wandering."¹ The testimony of the late Professor Palmer does not confirm this verdict. Famous for his knowledge of Arabic, which he spoke like a native, and of which language he was the Lord Almoner's Reader at Cambridge, he had traversed the country in every direction, and finally had taken part in

The difference between Professor Robertson Smith and Professor Palmer, touching the knowledge displayed in the Pentateuch of the Wilderness of the Wandering.

¹ *Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 324.

Professor
Palmer's
testimony.

the systematic labours of the Ordnance Survey of Sinai and the Palestine Exploration Fund. Of the general results of that survey, he says that "the investigators of the Sinai Expedition materially confirm and elucidate the history of the Exodus."¹ So also as regards Sinai, of which Professor Robertson Smith states that "geographers are unable to assign its site with certainty, because the narrative has none of that topographical colour which the story of an eye-witness is sure to possess,"² Mr. Palmer affirms just the reverse. "We have seen," he says, "how in the case of Sinai physical facts accord with the inspired account;" and again, "We are able not only to trace out a route by which the children of Israel could have journeyed, but also to show its identity with that so concisely but graphically laid down in the Pentateuch. We have seen, moreover, that it leads to a mountain answering in every respect to the description of the Mountain of the Law: the chain of topographical evidence is complete, and the maps and sections may henceforth be confidently left to tell their own tale."³ Finally, at the end of the second volume, he says, "The truth of the narrative of the Exodus has been of late years continually called in question; but I have purposely abstained from discussing any of these

¹ *The Desert of the Exodus*, i. 279.

² *Ibid.*

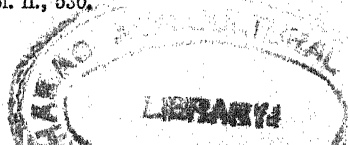
³ *Ibid.*, pp. 277, 279.

objections because I believe that geographical facts form the best answer to them all."¹

Now, if we put all these things together, they form a strong argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and they cover pretty nearly every part of it. It is easy to criticise and contradict details, but the combination of topographical correctness, and exact knowledge of manners and customs in four distinct and dissimilar regions forms a very convincing argument. And what deserves careful attention is, that the argument is strengthened by each increase of our knowledge. The careful survey of the wilderness of the wandering, carried out by Government officials would have disproved the Mosaic account if it had been a late production, written anywhere else than on the spot. So our increased knowledge of Egypt would have detected numerous glaring inaccuracies had the history been written by one dwelling in Palestine. Finally, the discovery of these Chaldean legends seems decisive as to the fact that the author must have had Chaldean materials before him, and apparently at a time when they were not debased and degraded by the introduction of the puerile polytheism which now forms so large a portion of their contents. Now, supposing that some nameless person could have

Details may be criticised, but the combination of the various lines of evidence forms a strong argument for the Mosaic authorship.

¹ *The Desert of the Exodus*, Vol. II., 530.



Only Moses could have traced the origin and growth of Israel from Paradise on the Euphrates to the conquest of Canaan.

accomplished one portion of the task, who but Moses could have traced the origin and growth of Israel as a nation from the Paradise of Adam on the Euphrates to the moment when it was finally mustered for the conquest of Canaan? Moses did combine the varied materials and knowledge necessary for the work, but besides Moses there is no one.

The "Higher Criticism" on the Pentateuch.

Its conclusions concerning the three codes.

But it is confidently put forward as a result proved by the "Higher Criticism," that the Pentateuch is an aggregation of legislation of various periods, all called Mosaic because springing from Mosaic origins: and especially that three codes may be separated from the rest, namely, that in Exodus xx. to xxiv., briefly recapitulated in chapter xxxiv; that in Deut. xii. to xxvi; and that in Lev. xvii. to xxvi., with scattered additions throughout the Books of Leviticus and Numbers. The first is often styled the Covenant-code, and is assigned to the age of Jehoshaphat; the second, or Deuteronomic, also called the people's code, is ascribed to the age of Josiah; while the Levitical or priestly code, is supposed to be later in date than the prophecy of Ezekiel, which is regarded as preparatory to it, and to have been incorporated in the Pentateuch about the time of the return from exile.

In opposition to these startling conclusions we venture to think that there is still abundant reason

to believe in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole. In a book so ancient there may be not only interpolations, but additions made to complete genealogies, and to bring the information down to later times. Notes also, and additions placed in the margin, may have been inserted by copyists in the text. We cannot suppose that a book of such immense antiquity has undergone none of those perils to which we know that the manuscripts of the New Testament have been subjected. But we also know that we have the text substantially such as it was in the days of Ezra, and we hope now to give reasons for believing that it is not an aggregation of legislation of various dates, but was written during the wanderings in the wilderness.

We grant that it has never been arranged in an orderly manner, but this is in favour of the Mosaic authorship. In Palestine the national code would have been digested and made uniform. The Pentateuch, after the close of the narrative of the Exodus, seems to have been written from time to time as occasion called for it. Inscribed on separate skins the various portions were independent of one another, and often a considerable time elapsed between the writing of one portion and that of another. Nearly forty years passed between the writing of the covenant-code in Exodus and the popular-code in Deuteronomy, and the purpose of

Despite these conclusions there is abundant reason for believing in the Mosaic authorship. Interpolations, etc.

The non-arrangement of the material in an orderly manner an argument for the Mosaic authorship.

The difficulty at the root of the critical theories.

the two was entirely distinct. But we must grant the difficulty which is at the root of these theories, namely, that the Mosaic legislation never was put thoroughly into practice, either in the times of the Judges or of the Kings. For this we shall give reasons hereafter; but in spite of this it has been shown in a convincing manner that the Levitical law underlies the whole of the Old Testament.¹ And this argument is made even the more convincing by the fact that it is never obtruded upon our attention, nor are continual appeals made to it. The Jewish nation did not yield a ready obedience to the Mosaic institutions, and the charge brought by the law-giver against the people, that they had been rebellious and of a stiff-neck during his lifetime, proved, as he expected, true after his death (Deut. xxxi. 27).

The law not carried out in its entirety till the time of Ezra.

Until the time of Ezra there never was a hearty attempt to carry out the law in its entirety, though David did much towards popularizing some of its enactments, while in others he acted independently of it.

The reason of this fact.

The reason of this is not far to seek. It was caused not so much by the absence of manuscripts—for this want is atoned for in many nations by the cultivation of the memory—as by the political

¹ See Hengstenberg on *Genuineness of Pentateuch*, translated by Ryland. Clark, Edinburgh, 1847. Bishop Browne's *Speaker's Commentary*, Introduction to Pentateuch, etc.

constitution of the Israelites. The conquered land was divided among twelve of the tribes, which were left each to manage for itself. The only attempt made to bind them together by any form of federation was the command that at the three great festivals they should go to worship at the place where the ark was deposited (Exod. xxiii. 17). Now, as even in the time of Samuel, the great restorer of Israel, the ark was left almost unnoticed at Kirjath-Jearim for twenty years (1 Sam. vii. 2), it is plain that few, except perhaps Levites, had attached much importance to this ordinance. Each tribe lived independently of the rest, and the natural result was that state of anarchy (Judg. xxi. 25) described in the Book of Judges, during which the people were struggling for very existence; and in no case was the yoke of an invader cast off by the combination of the whole race. It was always a local effort, led by a local patriot, with the aid of two or three tribes at most, which set the suffering district free from foreign oppression.

The political constitution of the Israelites.

Another very important consideration must be added. Throughout the country a large number of the original inhabitants of the land remained (Judges ii. 2, 3), and apparently occupied posts of vantage, like the Jebusites, who still retained the stronghold of Zion (2 Sam. v. 7), until David's time. Besides these the Israelites were accompanied by a "mixed multitude," or rabble of strangers and

The presence of many of the original inhabitants of the land.

The "mixed multitude" in Israel.

The survival of local superstitions and worship.

Local sanctuaries, high places, etc., winked at.

Disintegration of Israel after the days of Joshua and the elders who survived him.

The consequent degradation of the people.

foreigners (Exod. xii. 38), and the mass of the people were themselves debased by the slavery which they had endured in Egypt. In this we find the explanation of the fact that most of the superstitions and the local worships lived on in spite of the Mosaic law. Even the Christian church was content to adopt a number of heathen customs, and endeavour to give a purer colour to them, to the real loss of holiness and spirituality. Just the same thing went on in Israel (Judges ii. 12, 13), only with more determined course, because the resisting forces were weaker. And hence local sanctuaries, sacrifices at places unauthorized by the law, worship at high places, and other similar customs were for many centuries winked at. The state of the people was such that even good men were content to try to graft a purer worship upon these old Canaanite practices than entirely abolish them. And when, after the days of Joshua and the elders who survived him, a lax generation grew up, and the tribe of Ephraim, in whose territory the ark was deposited, became unpopular because of its overbearing ways, each tribe was sure to prefer a local place of worship to one not merely remote but uncongenial to its members.

The inevitable result of this disintegration of Israel was the degradation of the people. Slowly, but surely, they sank down from the state of civilization which had existed in the time of

Joshua, until literature ceased, and the art of writing became a mystery known only at Shiloh. The priests and Levites continued their official duties by rote, offering the sacrifices as they had seen them offered by their fathers. But where life is a daily struggle for existence, knowledge and refinement soon pass away. The Israelites during this period were like the dwellers in the backwoods of America, and would retain no more knowledge of their religion than the emigrants retain of the special doctrines of Christianity. There was still a strong element of piety among them, and of trust in Jehovah, but all knowledge of the enactments of their law was fast dying out.

Now, we find in the Pentateuch that Moses had not intended to leave the nation in this disjointed condition. On the contrary, he had made a very remarkable provision for the maintenance of its religion, and the preservation thereby of its unity. The tribe to which he himself belonged, and which was consequently then the most favoured tribe, instead of being placed in a commanding position, as was the case with Ephraim, was dispersed throughout the land. It had no separate territory, no tribal government, and was even made dependent upon the good will of the other tribes; for there was no legal method of enforcing payment of tithes and offerings; and when Jeroboam wanted to get rid of the Levites, and took very

The disjointed condition contrary to the purpose of Moses.

The provision made by Moses in the Levitical institution for the maintenance of religion and the preservation of unity.

The position of the tribe of Levi one of political inferiority but of high religious privilege and importance.

summary measures for depriving them of their exclusive privileges, the nation generally acquiesced (1 Kings xii. 16-33). Even Moses, while requiring that the Levites should be regarded everywhere as a resident magistracy, yet foresaw their probable poverty (Deut. xxi. 5, and xiv. 27, 29). Nevertheless, though, politically and as regards property, their position was one of manifest inferiority, yet it is described as a reward (Exod. xxxii. 26-29). The few towns given them were mere homesteads, and insufficient for their maintenance. They were too scattered to wield any physical power, or maintain themselves by war. Yet, if Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, and his laws inspired from above, the position of the Levites was most grand and honourable. For it was one of high social rank and great religious importance. Vulgar minds prefer material advantages. Those accorded by Moses to his tribesmen were moral and religious, and as we read the words of his blessing in Deut. xxxiii. 8-11, we feel that he regarded their position himself as one of exceptional privilege.

The number of males among the Levites represented as smaller than in other tribes.

But let us leave Moses out of the question, because in reasoning we must assume nothing, and consider facts which cannot fairly be denied. Confining ourselves therefore to the Levites, we find that their males are represented as amounting to twenty-two thousand. They were thus far fewer

in number than any of the other tribes, but for this there is a very probable explanation. In every other case the males "from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war," were counted, and thus it would include all slaves and dependents who were circumcised, according to the rule given in Gen. xiv. 14; xvii. 12, and who would form a considerable proportion of the retinue of the great landowners. We even find whole clans not of Israelitish blood incorporated into other tribes: thus Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, seems to have been an Edomite; but was counted with all his people as the adopted descendant of Hezron. Such additions must largely have swelled the numbers of other tribes; but of the Levites only those were counted who were eligible to "keep the charge of the sanctuary;" and as the stern command was given to put to death "the stranger that cometh nigh" (Num. iii. 38), it plainly follows that only such Levites as were members of the tribe by right of birth were included in the numbering. Very probably the descendants of those who formed the household of Levi when he went down into Egypt would be counted, and all who were formally members of the tribe; but none who were only dependents, or who had lately joined themselves to their number.

Explanation
of this fact.

Foreign
elements in
other tribes.

Only the
Levites
eligible for
the charge
of the
sanctuary
counted.

We find, therefore, a difference represented as already existing in the status of the Levites at the

The different status of the Levites existed two years after the exodus.

The Levitical law must have been enacted at the beginning of the wanderings in the wilderness.

Religious feeling and confidence in the loyalty of the other tribes must have actuated them.

numbering of the tribes at the beginning of the second year after the exodus from Egypt. And subsequently, upon the conquest of Canaan, this difference is perpetuated, and they are excluded from all share in the conquered lands. We find, moreover, that this exclusion, so fatal to their political influence, and their tribal independence, is represented as a high privilege (Exod. xxxii. 29) granted for devotion to Jehovah's service; though originally, and most correctly, if we regard only their temporal position, it is described as a punishment (Gen. xlix. 7). How, then, is this to be explained? I can see no other answer than that the Levitical law in its main particulars was enacted at the very beginning of the long wandering in the wilderness, and seemed so securely established, and held so high a place in the estimation of the people, that it was regarded as an enviable position to be its ministers. The Levites were parting with the substance. They were content to go without lands, were forfeiting their political importance, abandoning their right of self-government, were making themselves powerless in war, and accepting instead a life of dependence upon gifts and offerings. Not only must the religious feeling have been uppermost in their minds, but they must have been assured of the firm attachment of the other tribes to the Mosaic institutions before it would have been possible for them to commit such an act of

self-abnegation. They must have felt sure that the visits thrice in each year to the place where-
over the ark was set up (Exodus xxxiv. 23) would
be made, and the offerings duly brought, or they
would not have abandoned so much to take in its
stead so shadowy an endowment.

Moses must often have thought over the vital
question, of what would be the best form of govern-
ment for the people when established in Palestine.
The form he actually selected, under the Holy
Spirit's guidance, was one that made piety and
religion essential for its maintenance, while he
evidently regarded with dislike the kingly form,
which then almost universally prevailed. Probably
he had seen in Egypt reasons enough for his aver-
sion, and had suffered deeply in person. He had
seen, too, there all those abuses of despotic power
which he describes so graphically, and which some
critics suppose refer to the practices of Solomon's
court, as if that king did more than imitate Egyptian
practices. And yet he must have been aware that
monarchy was the political constitution which
would best ensure the independence of the people,
and give them strength for war. For it alone
would combine the scattered forces of the tribes,
and compel them to act in concert. Deliberately
he put this aside, with the feeling nevertheless that
the people sooner or later would demand it. What
he chose was what he thought would conduce most

The form of
government
selected to
be set up in
Palestine.

The kingly
form set
aside.

Distrust of
kings
justified.

to the moral and religious advancement of Israel. Probably he had counted too largely upon the influence which the Levites would exercise; but this, even when supplemented by that of the prophets, who certainly did not fail in activity or zeal, proved politically insufficient. But the distrust of kings entertained by Moses was fully justified. Jeroboam, as we have seen, swept the Levites away. Even Saul, the first king, made the race of Aaron feel his power; and though David and most of his descendants were friendly to priests and Levites, yet they never attempted to carry out the law in all its enactments. Many of them even disliked it, and Manasseh did his best to uproot it. The reason of this no doubt was that the law of Moses made the priest with the Urim and Thummim superior to the king; and many of the early prophets actually compelled the kings to obey them. The intention of Moses had apparently been to make the race of Aaron the real rulers of the people, with the Levites as their ministers. Their influence was to be mainly moral, and unhappily there was a want of means of making that influence sufficiently felt. The occasional visit to the central seat of the ark was not enough; nor do the Levites seem to have realized the importance of their duties. Samuel added the prophetic schools, but they too were not enough. Finally, the synagogue was formed; and when a place of worship was provided

Want of
means to
make the
Levitical
influence
adequately
felt.

in every town and village, and the Scriptures read there every Sabbath day, Israel became true to its law, and the times of ignorance and rebellion passed away. Unhappily, with the mass of the people, formalism then took the place of the heathenism too common before; while the Sadducees retained the old indifference to all that was best in the Mosaic law.

Supplementary institutions.

The spread of formalism.

Alike the patriotism, the self-denial, and the purposes sought by Moses are intelligible, if he were a real man, but the history is most improbable if he were a mythical hero. He might have made his own son his successor in the chieftainship: as a matter of fact he passes him by, and chooses instead Joshua, a young noble of the race of Ephraim. On the conquest of Canaan, Joshua received large landed estates, but for the sons of Moses there was nothing more than their share of the Levitical offerings. Even the headship of the tribe of Levi belonged to Aaron, the elder brother of Moses; and upon him and his descendants the high priesthood was conferred. They did consequently hold a grand position; but as for Moses himself, in 1 Chron. vi., after he has been barely mentioned, his race entirely drops out of the genealogy, while the family of Aaron is carefully described. All this is full of meaning typically, and finds its explanation in New Testament truths; but to these I must not refer, as they lie outside

The conduct of Moses unintelligible if he were a mythical hero.

Typical significance.

The
priesthood
permanent
and
hereditary,
but not the
office held
by Moses.

A dislike of
despotic
kingly power
impressed
upon the
people.

The purpose
of Moses
with
reference to
the national
life in
Canaan.

the argument. I only point out the facts as given in the narrative, that while Moses conferred the spiritual power on Aaron, and provided for its permanent continuance, he took diligent care that his own kingly office (Deut. xxxiii. 5), should neither be permanent nor hereditary. Yet hereditary rights were not unknown. The princes of each tribe were hereditary. The heads of the "fathers' houses" were hereditary, and in times of emergency their power became considerable. We gather from the words of Gideon (Judges vi. 15) that it was to them that the people looked for help. Yet Moses had impressed upon the nation so deep a dislike of the despotic power of kings, that Gideon resolutely refused that office when pressed upon him by the people after the defeat of Midian (Judges viii. 22, 23), and when already it was becoming manifest that the nation did need some central authority to bind it together, and give it security against foreign aggression.

The purpose which Moses was led to form was that after the conquest of Canaan the people should live in a state of patriarchal simplicity and of peace. He deliberately refused them that which would have made them strong for war; and Joshua, after the conclusion of the war, was to be merely a great landowner. There was to be no tyranny or despotism at home, and no aggression upon the neighbouring people. The theocracy is the most

perfect of ideal governments, but it requires a high state of morality in the people, great faith in God, and the maintenance of a manly spirit of patriotism throughout the nation. It was the want of this which caused its failure. There was not much feeling of fellowship among the tribes. Judah, which was to have been Israel's mainstay in war, kept aloof. Ephraim, the tribe which held the central position, while claiming the leadership, did little for the rest, and was disliked by them. Nowhere was there any strong sense of allegiance to Jehovah as their king; and we do not find that the Levites were either particularly active or successful in keeping alive in the hearts of the people a warm love for the Mosaic law. And yet, if in its external fortunes the political constitution of Moses was not successful; if Israel's existence was a troubled one, with but few periods of golden sunshine, nevertheless it accomplished its higher and spiritual work. It produced a very heroic national life, and one ever struggling onwards. Had Israel enjoyed a larger degree of ease and prosperity and security, it would not have accomplished its work for God so well. No sooner even did it attain unto empire under David, than, after a short era of earthly glory, the Divine Providence rent it into two petty kingdoms. When built up again by the piety of Ezra and Nehemiah, the conquests of Alexander placed in its neighbourhood states too powerful

Why the
theocracy
failed.

The work it
actually ac-
complished.

Gentile
supremacy.

The pheno-
mena of
Jewish
history.

The purpose
of the
Mosaic law.

Conclusion
from the
facts
surveyed.

Features of
the natural
life
described
in the
Pentateuch.

for it to be able to cope with them. The empire of the world was given to Assyrians and Persians, Greeks and Romans. The Jews were chosen for an entirely different purpose; and to this very day they set before us the same phenomenon that has ever marked their history, of a continued and permanent existence under temporal circumstances of a most adverse character. And we believe that the law of Moses was given for the sake of Israel's spiritual development, and that it fully accomplished its divine purpose.

We have examined, then, the facts as given in the history, and also inquired into the conduct, the purpose, and views of Moses in the establishment of the Levitical law, and have seen what were the influences to which he trusted for its maintenance. And we venture to say that at no time, except when they were just entering upon the conquest of Canaan, would such a state of things as we have described have been possible. We find in the Pentateuch a striving after an ideal perfection, and the expectation that, after taking possession of the promised land, the people would lead a peaceful life, blessed with a pure morality, high spiritual privileges, security from without, and self-restraint and respect for the rights of others at home. But the sole means used by the lawgiver are moral. Dispersed among the tribes, the Levites are to maintain among them the living power of religion; and for

its protection Israel must trust in God, who, if it is faithful to His service, will use supernatural means in its behalf. We find Isaiah picturing again such an ideal of earthly perfection in chaps. xi. and lxxv. There is the same longing, the same aspiration in the Christian Church. It would be untrue to say that Christianity has failed because the general state of Christendom falls so far short of the ideal proposed. Equally untrue is it to speak of the Mosaic law as a failure, because it too never realized its high expectations. Then as now it was a high privilege for God's people to have a noble ideal of faith and duty set before them, and in all the worthier members of the nation there was a continual striving to reach the high standard proposed. The difference between the two dispensations is, that Christianity, being intended for all mankind, enacts great principles, which each country is to embody in laws and institutions, according to the requirements of time and place. The Levitical law was for one small nation in one small corner of the world, and intended to last only until another prophet should come invested with powers similar to those of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15). In its higher object the Mosaic law was not unsuccessful. The ideal state of things which it proposed was rather a goal after which the nation was to struggle, than a thing capable of actual realization. The great objects, as we Christians

Similar
features in
the Christian
Church.

Differences
between
Christianity
and the
Mosaic law.

The higher
object of the
Mosaic law
accom-
plished.

The
threefold
object of the
Levitical
law.

believe, of the Levitical law were, first of all, to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah; secondly, to keep alive in the hearts of Israel the expectation of His coming; and thirdly, to give proof of His nature and office now that He has come

The non-
earthly
objects of the
Mosaic law
proved by
the Levitical
arrange-
ments.

I mention this not as any part of the argument to those outside the faith, but because many who believe might be distressed on finding that Moses proposed the establishment of a state of things on earth which never came to pass. Had the objects of the Mosaic law been earthly, it would be hard to understand how their lawgiver could have left the Israelites without any provision for their security from external attack; or how he could have trusted to the distribution of the Levites into forty-eight towns, four in each tribe, for the maintenance of that high state of piety and morality which actually existed during the days of Joshua, and the elders who had been brought under Moses' personal influence. But this seems to me an unassailable proof that Moses was the author of the Levitical law; for when would such an arrangement have been possible except just at the time when the people were entering upon the conquest of Canaan?

Only Moses
could have
been the
author of
the law.

It could not
have been
a post-
exilian
invention.

Gainsayers cannot say that this description was an invention of the priests and Levites after the return from Babylon, to bolster up their excessive claims. For if those claims had not had a very

solid foundation, the descendants of David would not have abstained so meekly from all attempts to re-establish the royal power. But besides this, we find that the Samaritans, who were very hostile to the Jews on many religious points, accepted the Pentateuch as their national law. The Samaritan characters are the old letters used by the Jews before the captivity, and resemble those found on the Moabite stone, and in the inscription lately discovered in the subterranean channel cut through the rock to convey the waters of Siloam into Jerusalem. We find them still used on the coins of the Asmonean princes of Judea, and it is probable that it was only gradually that the present Hebrew alphabet took the place of the old style of writing, and that the manuscripts used by Ezra were written in the same characters as have been retained in the Samaritan Pentateuch to this day. Now, not only did the Samaritans acknowledge the authority of the Pentateuch, but they attest its antiquity by the fact that its language was so obsolete that they could not understand it, and that consequently they were obliged to have a translation of it made for common use.

Acceptance
of the
Pentateuch
by the
Samaritans.

The
Samaritan
translation,
a proof of its
antiquity.

The same was the case with the Jews (Neh. viii. 8); for at Babylon they had learned to speak an Aramaic dialect, already in general use in Palestine before; for Jeremiah often employs it. Parts of Ezra and Daniel are in this tongue, and

The Jews of the captivity required a translation.

The antiquity and acknowledged authority of the book proved by its acceptance by Jews and Samaritans.

among the Ten Tribes it seems to have generally prevailed, and must further have been strangely corrupted in Samaria by the admixture of the languages spoken by the motley tribes which the Assyrians planted in the land (2 Kings xvii. 24). It is a remarkable fact that Hebrew thus became virtually an obsolete language during the captivity, and that the Jews, in order to understand it, made for themselves a translation, called the Chaldee Targum or Paraphrase, and that the Samaritans likewise had a Targum of their own. Now, it is absolutely incredible that Jews and Samaritans should both alike have accepted as their national law a book written in an obsolete language, unless that book had come down to them from ancient times as one of acknowledged authority.

The Samaritans did not accept any other book of the Old Testament as authoritative. It was therefore no common-place act, nor one done without discrimination. Moreover, the Pentateuch bore hardly upon them. The first priest of the temple on Mount Gerizim was a grandson of Eliashib, the high priest at Jerusalem, chased by Nehemiah from his office in the Jewish temple for marrying a daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria (Neh. xiii. 28; Josephus *Antiq.* xi. 7, 2), in disobedience to the command given in Deut. vii. 3. Others had been expelled with him, and yet no one ventured to dispute the authority of

the book, the decrees of which were being carried out so rigorously against themselves. We can account for this in no other way than by the fact that they found the Pentateuch in existence when they were compelled to settle in Samaria, and revered as their law by the old inhabitants of the land. It is utterly beyond belief that they should have accepted it from their rivals in Jerusalem. Yet in their land Jeroboam had stripped the Levites of their privileges, had admitted any one without distinction to the priesthood, and had gone so entirely counter to the Mosaic law that priests and Levites and even pious laymen had withdrawn from his dominions, and migrated to Judea, that they might worship according to their ancient faith (2 Chron. xi. 13-17).¹

Now, had there been a succession of kings like Jeroboam, it would have been well-nigh impossible for the Pentateuch to have retained its authority in Israel. Gradually it would have been rooted out. Equally impossible would have been the

The authority of the book recognized by the Samaritans even when its decrees were executed against themselves.

¹ The time when the Pentateuch was received by the people of Samaria as their national law is much discussed, and is by no means certain. See Nutt, *Samaritan Targum, with Introduction*. 1874. But the facts are admitted, that it was received by them as authoritative; that it contains readings different from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint texts; that it was translated into their patois, and fragments of their version are gradually accumulating in our libraries; and that it bore so hardly upon the Samaritans and upon the first high priest of their temple on Mount Gerizim, that they would scarcely have accepted it had not its authority been incontestable.

Observance
of many
Mosaic
precepts in
the kingdom
of Samaria
referred to
in the
prophecies
of Hosea,
Joel, and
Amos.

Elijah and
Elisha.

Their
influence.

Its limits.

remarkable fact that in the short compass of the books of Hosea, Joel, and Amos, all of them prophets to the Ten Tribes, a very large number of minute precepts of the Mosaic law are incidentally referred to as then observed in the kingdom of Samaria.¹ But when we turn to the history we find all this explained. After the overthrow of priests and Levites in Israel, there was a remarkable outburst there of prophetic activity. Elijah, the most energetic of the prophets, even wrought an entire recovery in the national faith by his contest with Ahab on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 39), and in spite of that king's hostility to Jehovah, and the more bitter and persecuting hatred of Jezebel, brought back the Ten Tribes to their ancient creed. And as we find him in his last journey, before his translation, occupied in visiting the schools of the prophets, it is evident that he had called them again into existence; and the life of his successor Elisha was spent in fostering and tending them. So great was the influence of these men that they placed Jehu upon the throne; and though he did less than they desired, yet he and his dynasty gave at least a nominal allegiance to Jehovah. He did not overthrow the rival worship at Bethel and Dan, nor restore the Levites to their old place; but the prophets were free to exercise their

¹ For a list of such passages see the article on the Pentateuch in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

influence, and the Mosaic law was more or less the law of the land. It would probably have been very difficult to have re-established the Aaronic priesthood, and to have restored to the Levites their cities and lands. Even after the interval of a very few years, Charles II. made no attempt to give back to the heirs of those who had suffered for his father their forfeited estates. Nearly a century had passed away since Jero-boam drove the Levites from their homes, and other rights had grown valid in the meanwhile. But, as the writings of the three prophets attest, the Levitical law was observed; and in the schools of the prophets copies of the law would be made, and large portions of it learnt by heart by the scholars.

The Mosaic law partially established.

Really we learn a great deal from the history of Jehu and his successors; for they are condemned for allowing the continuance in the ten tribes of that state of things which had generally existed in earlier days. It must, indeed, be granted, that the ark at Jerusalem, and the service in the temple there, held a higher place in the national estimation than had been attached to the sanctuary at Shiloh; and the local sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan¹ were more directly rivals to it. Still there are many indica-

Improved state of matters under Jehu and his successors.

¹ The history of this sanctuary is very remarkable. The manner of its foundation is described again and again as a fact illustrating the utter lawlessness of the times (Judg. xvii. 6; xviii. 1); nevertheless we find that so great was the value

Prophetic
expectations
from Jehu
only
partially
fulfilled.

tions that when the prophets placed Jehu on the throne, they had hoped for a more complete restoration of the Mosaic law than was actually effected. For Jehu succumbed to the old influences, and while forbidding the service of any God but Jehovah, yet did not feel himself strong enough to interfere with the popular manner of worship.

The history
from
Jeroboam
to the fall
of the
northern
kingdom
proves the
genuineness
of the
Mosaic law.

Thus the history of the times, from Jeroboam to the fall of the northern kingdom, forbids the belief that the Mosaic law could have been an invention or forgery of the period between the disruption of the kingdom and the exile in Babylon; for it was acknowledged in both portions of the divided kingdom as their national code, though in neither Israel nor Judah was it carried out in the spirit of loyal obedience. In Israel, the kings from Jero-boam to Ahab were its foes, yet it remained so strong in influence that upon it rested the mighty power exercised by the prophets. Subsequently, alike Samaritans and Jews attest its existence as a document of great antiquity at the period of the return from captivity; and it is not merely impro-

attached to the presence of a Levite that the having one within the gates was regarded as a surety that Jehovah would grant the family prosperity. What makes the occurrence more remarkable is that this Levite was a descendant of Moses, the inserted *n* making the name Manasseh, being in the Hebrew written over the word (Judg. xviii. 30).

bable, but impossible, that they would either of them have accepted from the other a law which demanded of them an unconditional obedience, unless its claims were of the highest kind. When, then, we may ask, could it have been enacted, if not by Moses previously to the conquest of Canaan?

Any other date for the Pentateuch than the conquest of Canaan is impossible.

Certainly not in the times of the Judges. The state of things was then anarchical; and turbulence, foreign oppression, and internal weakness prevailed. Once indeed the tribes combined to destroy Benjamin, and that for a wrong done to a Levite; but the fact to be explained is that the Levites were left without possessions, and yet given a position regarded as one of great honour. No war or revolt could have accomplished so strange an arrangement. And when we come to the age of Samuel, we find him supplementing the institution of priests and Levites by an entirely fresh organization. He does not revive a central sanctuary, with the tabernacle and ark as the symbol of the Divine Presence, such as had existed at Shiloh in his own youthful days. On the contrary, he leaves the ark at the house of a private person, where it remained until the days of David (2 Sam. vi. 2). The reason of this is to be found in the preference given by Samuel to the moral as compared with the ritual teaching of the law (1 Sam. xv. 22). It was not then to the ark but to his schools that this great reformer looked for the

It could not have been written in the time of the Judges.

Nor in the time of Samuel.

Samuel preferred the moral to the ritual teaching of the law.

No preference given to the priests and Levites in the schools founded by Samuel.

The schools not founded on the Pentateuch.

Their origin.

They met a want.

The preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures due to them.

restoration of Israel; and he gave no preference in them to priests and Levites. They were open to all, and wrought wonders in rapidly raising the mental and moral state of the people. But there is nothing in the Pentateuch on which they are founded. That was the title-deed of the nation to Palestine, and contained an account of the institutions by which the national life was to be maintained: but Samuel's schools found in them no authorization, and nothing on which to ground their existence. Probably they grew out of an attempt made by Samuel, to teach to a few young men lodged in booths in the Naioth, or meadows near his home at Ramah, the arts of reading and writing which he had himself learned at Shiloh. He had probably felt the need of young and active men to assist him in his undertakings, and began to train such as came to his hand. And the institution grew and filled up a great want; and there can be little doubt that to the schools of the prophets we owe the preservation of the Old Testament Scriptures. But Samuel never attempted to restore the Levitical law, nor to confine himself within its limits. He found the nation on the very verge of ruin (1 Sam. xiii. 19, 20); and while the ark was hidden away at Kirjath-Jearim, and the Philistines were the dominant power, he was labouring steadily to bring back the people to the worship of Jehovah; but his main object throughout was

the restoration of moral purity and personal holiness (*ibid.* xii. 14-25). As soon as they were ready to put away their Baalim and Ashtoreth (*ibid.* vii. 4), he openly threw off the Philistine yoke, and became the civil governor, acting as judge, especially in the central part, where the Benjamites dwelt. Saul completed the work of Israel's independence, and at first greatly honoured the priests of Aaron's line (*ibid.* xiv. 3). But neither by Samuel nor by Saul was any attempt made to establish the law of Moses thoroughly, though each did something towards its better observance. But had it been a forgery by Samuel or even a compilation from documents rescued from Shiloh, it would have borne more directly upon the circumstances of the time, and the attempt would have been made to carry it out more fully. This was not done; and we cannot see that either Samuel or Saul at any time possessed either the power, or had the wish to invest the Levites with exceptional privileges; or that the Levites would have given up their lands and tribal possessions and independence in order that they might be dispersed throughout the country, for the purpose of maintaining by moral influence, institutions lately invented. What Samuel really did was to supplement the influence of the Levites, which had proved insufficient to save the nation from decay, by a new organization of young men of any tribe, taught to

Samuel's main object the restoration of moral purity and personal holiness.

Had Samuel forged or compiled the Pentateuch it would have borne more directly on the times and been more fully carried out.

Samuel supplemented the influence of the Levites.

read the law and love it; but made even more earnest as regards its moral exactments than its ritual observances (1 Sam. xv. 22).

David could not have established the Levitical institutions.

David alone remains, a monarch undeniably of great power, and thoroughly in earnest in his love for the Mosaic law, and especially for that most important principle of having a central sanctuary which the people should regularly visit, and whither they should bring their offerings. Though not permitted to build the temple because of his constant wars, in which certainly he had violated the Mosaic ideal of Israel's national existence, he made great preparations for it, and especially he distributed the priests into their courses, and arranged the musical services of the sanctuary. Confessedly the position of priest and Levite was made by him one of great honour, and I could quite imagine men giving up their farms to hold such distinguished positions. What is inconceivable is that he should have taken a whole tribe, and that no trace should remain of such a revolutionary measure as the dispossessing them of their property to make them thus ministers of religion. Surely some geographical vestiges would remain to indicate their former location, and there would have been long discontent at the driving of the inhabitants away from forty-eight towns to give them to this tribe thus suddenly metamorphosed.

No geographical traces of his setting apart the tribe, as there could not fail to have been had he done it.

We find the influence of Samuel's schools on

the services of the sanctuary. For the sons of Jeduthun are said to "prophesy with a harp." So it is said that Asaph and others "prophesied according to the commandment of the king" (1 Chron. xxv. 2, 3), that is, played music. Samuel had made great use of religious music in his schools, and minstrelsy was hence called prophesying. David, therefore, would have found in the prophets men capable of playing with instruments, and already partly trained for his use; but we can see no possibility that a whole tribe accustomed to other occupations would have been fit for his purposes. The only feasible explanation is that they had from the days of Moses been set apart for God's service, and that the king submitted to institutions which he found in existence.

The influence of Samuel's schools traceable in David's action.

The Levites must have been set apart by Moses.

So also David distinguished the descendants of Aaron from the rest, though the distinction between priest and Levite is said by the higher criticism to belong to the last, or Levitical law-code. The history gives the pathetic account of Eli's death; the horrible cruelty of Saul to the priests at Nob; the flight of Abiathar to David, and the long friendship between the two. Is all this a baseless invention? If not—and no sane man could suppose that these narratives had absolutely no foundation—if then, they have any truth in them, even though they be but popular tales, then the race of Aaron was dominant at a

The facts of David's history inconsistent with the view that the distinction between priest and Levite was of very late origin.

The Mosaic
origin
explains
everything.

central sanctuary, placed in the territory of powerful Ephraim, and the Levites were a tribe to whom no possessions had been given, but who were dispersed among the rest. If this was done by Moses, all is natural. It was a most enviable position if it were secure; and it would only be secure if the law was so firmly established in the hearts of the people as to be certain of being established in Canaan as soon as the conquest was complete. The people were rebellious and of a stiff neck, but the history describes them as obedient to the law during the days of Joshua and of the elders who had known Moses. The command of Moses could easily be carried out in Joshua's days, for the Levites would readily accept, and the people willingly concede, the exceptional place assigned them. At no other time was it possible, or even conceivable.

No other
theory can
explain the
facts.

We have, then, in the circumstances of the Levites a strong proof that the institutions of Moses date from the conquest of Canaan. At no subsequent period could the Levites have been so separated from the rest. And at no subsequent time could the Pentateuch have been written. Not under the kings, or it would have put more favourably the merits of a form of government which had rescued Israel from the depths of internal weakness and decay, and given it strength and empire. Not by Samuel, or it would have been

made more suited to his times, and given more direct aid to his reformatations. Not under the anarchy of the Judges. For the ideal state contemplated in the Pentateuch of a people strong in faith and pure in morality, living under the direct protection of Jehovah, was the very reverse of the miserable reality.

This general argument might suffice for our purpose, but a few words may still seem desirable with respect to the three codes, of which we are assured by the disciples of the higher criticism that they are proved by internal evidence to belong to a late period in Jewish history.

The three codes.

Now, in the code contained in Exod. xx.-xxiv., we have brief commands upon a few necessary matters, such as would have been useful certainly for Jehoshaphat's judges, but of which many were equally necessary in the wilderness, and all would have been required on taking possession of the Promised Land. Neither priests nor Levites are mentioned in it, nor any religious matters except the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the appearing before Jehovah at the three great feasts. But bound up with it are promises of supernatural aid in the subjugation of the nations in Canaan, and the words of Exod. xxiii. 20-33 could have been written only in the wilderness, unless the whole be a deliberate forgery. Moreover, if the proof that a law was not kept be proof that it was not enacted,

The contents of the code in Exodus xx.-xxiv.

The non-observance no proof of the non-enactment of a law.

The
Sabbatical
year enacted
by it never
kept.

The Deuter-
onomic code
could
not have
grown up in
Manasseh's
time.

Jeremiah
could not
have written
it.

then this code no more came into existence in the days of Jehoshaphat than in those of Moses. For the Sabbatical year never was kept at any time whatsoever, and apparently no more by Ezra than by Samuel or David, even though the seventy years of exile were regarded as a punishment for disobedience to this law. But no great stress is laid upon this code, and of far more importance is the code in Deuteronomy, said to have been incorporated in the Mosaic legislation, early in the reign of Josiah. Now, first, there is here an antecedent improbability; for the argument supposes that this code grew up during the dark days of Manasseh, when that king, with fanatic zeal, did his cruel utmost to destroy priest and prophet, and to root out the religion of Jehovah. There used to be a short way out of this difficulty by assuming that Jeremiah was the author of Deuteronomy; but this theory is abandoned. Not only is it granted that the style of Deuteronomy is classical, while that of Jeremiah is debased by the presence in it of numerous Aramaic forms, but also that very much in the book was utterly distasteful to the priests at Jerusalem,¹ and that Josiah, earnest as he was, could not therefore carry it into practice. Undoubtedly the language both of the Book of Jeremiah and of those of the Kings is coloured by the

¹ See Robertson Smith's *Old Testament in Jewish Church*, p. 354.

thoughts and the phraseology of Deuteronomy; but this is the result of the deep impression made by the discovery of the book, and we are told that this impression was made, not by the code, but by the threats contained in other parts of Deuteronomy, because all pious men felt that they must be near their fulfilment.

The Book of Jeremiah coloured by the thoughts and language of Deuteronomy.

But how could a feeling, reaching almost to terror (2 Kings xxii. 11, 13), have been created by a "legal fiction," which grew up when the whole religion of Jehovah was proscribed, and which had no author? Legal fictions get into codes of law by the general consent of lawyers for convenience sake, and because they have been forms long known and used. Usually they were facts first, and came to be fictions by being retained when the facts had changed. Moreover, are we to suppose that Hilkiah and Ahikam, and the other priests and princes mentioned in 2 Kings xxii. 14, were men so devoid of understanding as to be imposed upon by a recent forgery, and take it for a document many centuries old?

The priests and princes of Josiah's time could not have been imposed on by a recent forgery.

But it is said that Deuteronomy was not observed until the days of Josiah, and therefore could not have existed. Let us form a judgment upon this argument by one very remarkable fact. The Israelites kept the Passover once only in the wilderness (Num. ix. 5); they did not keep it again until the rite of circumcision had been renewed at Gilgal (Josh v. 10), and henceforward the Passover drops

Argument from non-observance refuted.

entirely out of sight until the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 21). It does not follow that it never was kept, nor does silence prove that other Mosaic institutions were not kept, though probably in a careless and occasional manner. But if thus the Passover, which is an integral part of the history in Exodus, and anterior in its founding to all the laws, was so neglected, the assertion that Deuteronomy did not exist, because it, too, was neglected, rests evidently upon a basis too weak to give us any confidence in its stability.

Adaptation
of Deuter-
onomy to
the time
anterior to
the conquest
of Canaan.

There is also much in Deuteronomy which belonged to the time just anterior to the conquest of Canaan; much admirably adapted to win the affections of the people for their law; and it is only by laying stress on detached particulars that it can be pressed down to a late date. But I must hasten to the third, and to my mind the most extraordinary conclusion of Reuss¹ and his followers, namely, that the priest-code, contained in the middle books of the Pentateuch, was subsequent to the Deuteronomic code, and came into existence in the period between Ezekiel and Ezra.

Reuss's
theory of the
date of the
priest-code.

By this theory we are asked to believe that the tribe of Levi was at an early date deprived of all share of the conquered country, and placed in a dependent and inferior position, though it was the

¹ First promulgated in his article on "Judenthum," in Ersch & Grüber's *Encyclopadia* in 1833.

lawgiver's own tribe, while the Levitical law, which gave it compensation, was enacted only after a lapse of some hundreds of years.

We are asked also to believe that the Book of Ezekiel is a sort of tentative programme standing half-way between the Deuteronomic code and the Levitical, which latter was a scheme for thorough sacerdotal supremacy, palmed off at the return from exile. Yet the royal house of David accepted this new legislation without a struggle, and alike Jews and Samaritans acknowledged it, though an utterly modern creation, as the undoubted law of their ancestors in olden time.

Its demand
on our
belief.

We are asked also to believe that the Temple preceded the Tabernacle. It was natural for the mind of Ezekiel in exile to revert to the thought of the temple at Jerusalem, and to connect with it his reform, and his picture of Israel's future. It is incredible that Ezra, or any priest similarly in exile, should have built his scheme of priestly rule upon the tabernacle, and the incidents of the life of wanderers in the wilderness. These Levitical laws all point to the wilderness as the home of Israel at the time when they were framed, and this gives strong internal evidence for their genuineness. If framed at Babylon, in a region the very opposite in all respects of the wilderness, they must have betrayed their falsity: but the higher critics detect no traces of this inevitable result.

The theory
incredible

The higher criticism taxes faith more than the old belief which it repudiates.

It is difficult to believe all this, and generally we find that the disciples of the higher criticism tax our faith infinitely more than the old belief did which they pronounce incredible. But there is one other thing even more difficult; for we are required to believe that the spiritual teaching of the prophets preceded the ritual teaching of the law.

Isaiah.

Isaiah, at a time when, as the result of Hezekiah's restoration of the temple services, its courts were thronged with worshippers, pronounced all Levitical observances to be an abomination, if offered without purity of heart (Isa. i. 13).

Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, deeply impressed with the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy, yet regarded the temple as almost a hindrance in his way (Jer. vii. 4); and instead of the Mosaic covenant made at the time when "God took Israel by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt," longed for a new covenant written on men's hearts (chap. xxxi. 31-34).

Ezekiel.

Ezekiel, while explaining and modifying many Mosaic enactments, yet has no desire for the restoration of the Levitical ritual, but looks forward to a new covenant to replace that of Moses (Ezek. xxxvii. 21-28; and xxxvi. 26). Now these two prophets

The prophetic class.

especially influenced the minds of the exiles at Babylon. Their repentance there was emphatically Jeremiah's work. The prophets, moreover, formed a learned, a numerous, and a powerful class. They were too men thoroughly in earnest. Yet we are

asked to believe that their teaching was entirely put aside, and that they quietly acquiesced in this surrender of the work of centuries.

Incredible that their teaching was set aside.

Let us take but a single point. The Levitical theory of the Atonement is most precious when regarded as prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ. Its value lies in its typical teaching. But until the substance was revealed in Christ it was insufficient, and psalmist and prophet alike pronounced it so, and longed for something better to cleanse the heart and conscience than the blood of bulls and goats. And yet we are to believe that prophet and psalmist come first, and the Levitical sacrifice afterwards.

The true value of the Levitical theory of the Atonement.

And herein, perhaps, lies the solution of the difficulty which the higher criticism endeavours to remove. The Mosaic law was not strictly kept, and holy and inspired men laboured less zealously than we might have expected for its observance; partly because the political condition of Israel forbade; partly because it was above the moral state of the people, and was intended gradually to raise and elevate them; but chiefly because it was prophetic. Its great use was for future times. And so placed first, with the prophets to build upon it a teaching full of spiritual longings, and leading onwards to Christ, all is in its place. The temple ritual was replete with typical truth, and this the prophets partly unfolded, and so prepared for its

The solution of the problem, which the higher criticism fails to solve.

The Mosaic law prophetic.

Personal
holiness the
first lesson of
the prophets.

The
expectation
of a better
covenant
their
second
lesson.

The three
codes
Mosaic.

Their
differences
explained.

full realization in Christ. But their first lesson, from Samuel onward, was that personal holiness must come before ritual. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." And their next lesson was that of hope and the confident expectation of the revelation of a better covenant, which should be written on men's hearts, and which could take away sin. But to reverse this, and suppose that the Levitical theory took form after the uprise of the prophetic schools, and could be inserted in the Pentateuch without stern resistance on the part of the prophets; and to imagine that the change in men's hearts wrought at Babylon by the teaching of Jeremiah, ended in the invention of an elaborate code, framed on the idea of life in the wilderness, and of a moveable tabernacle, all this is incredible; and until stronger arguments have been brought forward in proof, we must respectfully withhold our assent, and continue to believe that all three codes were the work of Moses, and differ chiefly because they were promulgated at different times, and give different aspects of a legislation that was prophetic in its main and most precious teaching.

FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR

AND HIS

THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

AND OF

The New Testament Writings.

BY THE

REV. A. B. BRUCE, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF

'THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE;' "THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST;"

"THE PARABOLIC TEACHING OF CHRIST," ETC., ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,

LONDON.

Argument of the Tract.

It is pointed out that Baur exercises influence in this country through translations of his works, through the work entitled *Supernatural Religion*, and through the study of the Hegelian philosophy in the Universities.

A few biographical particulars concerning Baur are supplied.

The influence of Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Strauss, on the formation of his later views concerning Christianity, is briefly adverted to.

Then follows the exposition of these views, forming what is known as the Tübingen theory as to the origin of Christianity and the New Testament writings.

The theory is next criticised, the chief positions being these:—The theory is based on the two philosophical assumptions that the miraculous is impossible, and that all historical movements proceed according to the Hegelian law of development by antagonism; the alleged antagonism between Paul and the original Apostles has no real foundation in the New Testament; the criticism of New Testament books associated with this theory does not stand the test of impartial investigation; the theological tendencies ascribed to the writers of these books are, for the most part, imaginary.

Then follows a summary of these criticisms, and a reference to the good incidentally resulting from the promulgation of the theory.

The Tract concludes with a brief statement as to the nature of the Gospel and the harmony of the New Testament writings.

FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR
AND HIS
THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY
AND OF
The New Testament Writings.

IT is now nearly half a century since the famous Tübingen theory as to the origin of Christianity and of the New Testament writings was propounded by the learned and able German theologian above named. The school of criticism founded by Dr. Baur is decadent, or nearly dead, in Germany; and many of the most characteristic positions of the founder have been conclusively refuted and abandoned even by his own disciples. But the movement he originated, though pretty well spent in his native country, has still vitality here, where it is of much more recent date; for it takes Continental waves of thought well-nigh a generation to reach our British shores. The English public have been made more generally acquainted with Dr. Baur and his views within the last twelve or fifteen years

The subject
not out
of date.

Recent
publications
relating to
it in
England.

Super-
natural
Religion.

The
Hegelian
philosophy
at some
of our
Universities.

by translations of some of his works, and by the anonymous publication entitled *Supernatural Religion*, the commercial success of which—for it has passed through several editions—may be regarded as an index of the eager interest taken by a large public in such sceptical literature. Another fact which has to be taken into account is the present popularity in this country, at least in certain centres of learning, of the Hegelian philosophy.¹ As long as Hegel is in vogue, Baur will be in favour; for, as we shall see, Baur's theory is simply Hegelianism as understood by him, applied to the

¹ It is not easy to indicate, in a few words, the character of this philosophy, about the significance of which even its adherents are much divided in opinion. It may, however, be described as an idealistic Pantheism. It differs from the system of Spinoza chiefly in two respects. First, in its conception of God: while, in the Spinozan system, the absolute being is conceived of as *substance*, in the Hegelian it is conceived of as *spirit*. Second, in the view taken of the connection between God, the world of nature, and man. In Spinoza's theory God is endowed with the attributes both of matter and of mind, and the phenomena of the material and spiritual universe are thought of as two parallel streams of being corresponding to each other, but not causally connected. In Hegel's theory God, nature, and man are thought of as a series or circle. God objectifies Himself in nature and rises out of nature, returns to Himself and becomes conscious of Himself, in man. This is the great process of the universe, and it answers to the process of the human mind in thought, which moves in a perpetual rhythm of affirmation, negation, and synthesis of opposites. This rhythmical movement is the law at once of logic, of history, and of the universe at large. The universe is a great movement of thought. We shall see further on the use made by Baur of this law in explaining the origin of Christianity.

fundamental problems of the Christian faith. It remains to add that Baur's influence is traceable even in quarters where it is strenuously resisted. Believing theologians in all parts of Europe have to notice him, however widely they differ from him. No one affects to ignore him.

We cannot, therefore, regard ourselves as undertaking an idle task when we endeavour to expound and criticise, in a simple popular manner, a theory which makes Christianity a thing of purely natural origin, calls in question the authenticity of all but a few of the New Testament books, and makes the whole collection contain, not a harmonious system of Divine truth, but a confused mass of merely human and contradictory opinions as to the nature of the Christian religion.

The purpose
of the Tract.

It may increase the interest and gratify the natural curiosity of some of our readers if we preface our exposition and criticism with a few biographical particulars.

Ferdinand Christian Baur was born in 1792, in a village called Schmieden, near Stuttgart; but after his eighth year his boyhood was passed in a small town at the southern base of the Swabian Alps, called Blaubeuren, a few miles distant from Ulm. His father was a clergyman, and exercised his sacred office in both places successively in a diligent, conscientious manner, adding to his other duties the instruction of his son till his fourteenth

Biograph-
ical sketch.

His
education.

* year. At that age the boy went to school, to the seminary of the place, called the Cloisters, proceeding to Tübingen in 1809. Both at school and at the university he developed a decided taste and talent for classical and philosophical studies. On leaving the university in 1814, he acted, for a year or two, as an assistant preacher in a rural parish. On the death of his father in 1817, he was appointed to a professorship in the seminary in Blaubeuren, where he very soon made his mark as a teacher, and counted among his pupils some youths who afterwards became famous: one being D. F. Strauss, author of *The Mythical Theory of the Life of Jesus*.

Professor at
Tübingen.

In 1826, Baur was appointed to the vacant chair of historical theology in Tübingen, which he filled till his death in 1860.

His habits
of study.

Baur was a hard student, exceptionally so even in Germany, where it is common for students to do an amount of brain work in a day which puts us of these islands to shame. After his appointment to the chair in Tübingen his habit was to rise, summer and winter, at four o'clock in the morning, working in winter for some hours without a fire, out of consideration for the domestics, though the cold was occasionally so severe that the ink was frozen! He worked at this rate from early morn till bed time, with only the necessary interruptions for public duties, meals, and exercise, to make himself master of the subjects which he had

to teach; in which, being a shy, modest, scrupulously conscientious man, he deemed himself so deficient at the time of his appointment, that he felt inclined to refuse it. Whatever deficiencies he might be conscious of to begin with, it is easy to see that an able man with such extraordinary application was likely, ere long, to become a person of great learning, and, unless in this he was to be an exception among his countrymen, also a voluminous author. Baur was both in an eminent degree. His works exhibit immense learning, as well as transcendent ability, and they are very numerous, and on a great variety of subjects within the general limits of theology. In both respects he is one of the foremost figures in the whole history of German theological literature. However widely and seriously we dissent from his later views, with which his name is chiefly associated, it is only justice to pay this tribute at the outset to his fame as an author.¹

His learning
and ability.

“Later views” we have said; for Baur began his literary career very early, and his theological starting-point was very different from his goal. His first essay appeared in 1817, in a theological serial, and was orthodox and supernaturalistic in its attitude, after the tradition of the old Tübingen

His early
views

¹ The foregoing biographical particulars are taken from Zeller's article on Baur in his *Vorträge und Abhandlungen*. 1865.

His gradual
progress to
Naturalism.

Schleier-
macher's
influence
over Baur.

school. The founder of the new Tübingen school passed from supernaturalism to thorough-going naturalism very gradually, and the process by which his ultimate scheme of thought was worked out in his mind has a long history. Among the influences to which the change is to be attributed a very prominent place is due to Schleiermacher, whose *Glaubenslehre*, first published in 1821, Baur studied with the receptive enthusiasm of youth, during the Blaubeuren period of his professional career. Schleiermacher has sent his disciples in very different directions; some upwards towards a fuller faith than his own, some downwards into the depths of theological negation. The impulse communicated to Baur was downward. The tendency and effect of Schleiermacher's exposition of the Christian faith are to reduce the supernatural to a minimum, and to make the little that remains appear as natural as possible, and so to satisfy the claims of science and philosophy, while endeavouring to do justice to the sentiments of believers. Christianity appears simply as one, though the best, of the forms which the religious consciousness has assumed in the religious history of mankind; Christ as the ideal man—consummation and crown of humanity, exhibited only in rude condition in the man of the first creation; and many doctrines previously deemed important are treated as of no essential moment. The disciple caught the

spirit of the master, and carried it out to consequences at which he stood aghast; treating, for example, the ideal humanity of Christ as a purely subjective notion, which had no foundation in the life of Jesus.¹

Another of Baur's masters was Hegel. Hegel's influence came later, and may not have been so deep or decisive as Schleiermacher's; for it is the favourite authors of our early years that tell upon us most powerfully. But it is apparent to any one who reads the works in which Baur expounds his theory respecting the origin of Christianity, such as *The History of Christianity in the Three First Centuries*,² how completely the great philosopher's system had taken possession of his mind. The style is completely overlaid by the characteristic phrases of the Hegelian philosophy. Nor is Hegel's influence a matter affecting merely the form of thought. From that philosopher Baur took the great law of *development by antagonism*, of which we shall have occasion to say more hereafter. We simply ask our readers to take preliminary note of the fact here.

Hegel's
influence.

Baur's
fundamen-
tal prin-
ciple derived
from
Hegel.

Another of the men from whom Baur received a powerful impulse was one of his Blaubeuren

¹ Vide Baur's work on Gnosticism: *Die Christliche Gnosis*, pp. 626-668.

² This forms the first volume of his great work on the Christian Church.

The
influence of
Strauss upon
him.

pupils, Strauss. When Strauss' *Leben Jesu* appeared in 1835, Baur recognized at once its power and its defect. Its value for him lay in the completeness with which, as he thought, it demolished the traditional faith in the historical truth of the Gospel records, so clearing the way for critical inquiry into the genesis of these records. Its defect, in his view, was that it confined itself to criticism of the history, and did not attempt criticism of the writings. This defect Baur set himself to supply, striving to show how the various Gospels arose, and why it is that they cannot be trusted as sources of information concerning the life and teaching of Jesus.¹

In proceeding now to expound Baur's theory concerning these Gospels, and the New Testament writings generally, and concerning the origin of Christianity, we ask our readers to remember that we concern ourselves only with those works of our author which directly bear on these topics. We have further to explain that our aim is not to show the genesis of the theory in the author's mind, but to exhibit it as it finally took shape—a fully developed and closely connected system of thought,—to exhibit it, not exhaustively, but in its main outlines.

Baur's
theory.

According to this theory, then, the great out-

¹ His views on the Gospels are set forth in the work, *Die Kanonischen Evangelien*. 1847.

standing fact regarding the Christianity of the apostolic age was a radical contrariety of view as to the nature and destination of the new religion, dividing the Church into two parties, one of which, headed by the Apostle Paul, held that the Gospel was for the world and for all, Jew and Gentile, on equal terms; while the other, having all the original apostles, the companions of Jesus, on its side, made Christianity essentially Jewish by insisting on the perpetual obligation of the Jewish law. The one was the party of the *Paulinists*, or Universalists; the other was the party of the *Judaists*. This controversy in its origin, progress, and termination by compromise or reconciliation, covered the history of the Church for a hundred years, from the time when Paul's principal epistles were written, down to a date somewhat later than the middle of the second century. All the writings of the New Testament, it is maintained, have reference to and spring out of the various stages of the controversy, and their approximate date can be determined by inspection of their contents, showing to which stage they must have belonged. Clear evidence, it is alleged, of the existence of this controversy can be discerned more or less in nearly all the books, but more especially in certain of their number. Before going into this, however, it may be well to go back to the fountain-head, and to consider the account given of the teaching

The supposed conflicting parties in the early Church.

Paulinists and Universalists.

The origin of all the New Testament Scriptures traced to this controversy.

of the Founder of the faith. We shall thus become acquainted with Dr. Baur's conception of the Christianity of Christ, and learn what, in his opinion, were the elements therein which laid the foundation for subsequent misunderstanding.

Baur's views
on the
Christianity
of Christ.

Christianity as taught by Jesus, according to Baur, was a purely natural product of certain influences, which can be specified. He attempts the same task with reference to the origin of Christianity, that Gibbon sought to accomplish with reference to its subsequent progress and triumph. And he gets rid of the supernatural in the same way as the great English historian, *i.e.*, not by formal argument directed against the possibility or reality of the miraculous, but by the tacit assumption that there were no miracles to be accounted for, and by an enumeration of natural causes, which of themselves appear to him quite sufficient to account for the rise of the new religion. The author very distinctly indicates his attitude in the opening sentences of his work on *Christianity and the Christian Church of the Three First Centuries*. He says:—

He assumes
that
there were
no miracles.

“In no department of historical inquiry does all that relates to the contents of a definite series of historical phenomena depend so much on the initial point from which it starts, as in the history of the Christian Church; nowhere does so much depend as here, on the conception we form of the point from which the whole historical course takes its beginning. The historian who comes to the task with the faith of the Church stands at its threshold before the wonder of all wonders, before the original fact of Christianity—that the Son of God descended

from the eternal throne of Godhead to this earth, and became man in the womb of the Virgin. He who sees in this an absolute miracle, puts himself thereby outside of all historical connection. A miracle is an absolute beginning, and the more this beginning conditions all that follows, the more must the whole series of the phenomena which belong to the subject of Christianity bear the same stamp of the miraculous. . . . Historical investigation has therefore very naturally an interest in drawing even the miracle of the absolute beginning into the historical connection, and resolving it as far as possible into its natural elements."

What, then, were these natural elements which together constituted the Christianity of Christ? Baur answers this question very explicitly. There were four elements, for which, as he thinks, Christianity was indebted to the previous history of the world. These were its *universalistic spirit*, its *subjectivity* or *spirituality*, its *pure monotheism*, and its *ascetic ideal of life*. The first it got from Rome, the seat of a universal empire; the second from Greece, which had been taught by the Athenian sage that the first business of man was to know himself, and to realize his importance as a moral subject; the third from the Hebrew Scriptures, as interpreted by the Alexandrian philosophy, represented by Philo, whereby the Jewish idea of God was purged from particularism, and adapted to the requirements of a universal religion; and the fourth from the Jewish anchorites, known by the name of the *Essenes*.

Christ's merit was to discern these essential features in the religious movements of the past,

His account
of the
component
elements of
Christianity.

Whence
they were
derived

Universal-
ism.

to appreciate their importance for the present, and to see in them the germs out of which might spring a great future. No less, but also no more. Universalism was in the air, and it only required a sympathetic powerful mind to lay hold of it, and introduce it into the sphere of religion, and make it valid there. It was to be expected that some one would arise to become in religion the mouth-piece of the Time-spirit; and from the nature of the case it was also to be expected that when the Man appeared he would not speak in vain, for the hour was propitious. Political Universalism pre-existing insured success for religious Universalism adequately proclaimed.

Spirituality.

So likewise with the second element, *spirituality*. "Know thyself," Socrates had said, and the word had gone sounding down the ages, audible to an ever-increasing number of men, awakening responsive echoes in the schools of philosophy; Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics, and Eclectics vying with each other in the emphasis of their response; till at length the voice was caught up by the sage of Galilee, and re-uttered in his own dialect, with a power sufficient to create a new world, founded on faith in the infinite importance of man as a moral personality—a faith which, making all turn on the spirit, was therefore fit to be the faith of all, the religion of humanity.

Not less indebted to the past, according to Dr.

Baur, was Jesus, even for his ideas of God, and of human life. His Father-God, beautiful as the conception is, was simply the God of Israel humanized by means of the philosophy of Philo. His severe maxims of conduct, prescribing a life of self-denial, and his beatitudes on poverty, emanated from the shores of the Dead Sea, where the Essene brotherhood spent their days in retirement from the world.

Idea of God
and human
life.

Such, according to the Tübingen theory, were the elements of the religious idea of Jesus, and such their supposed sources. But these by themselves would not have sufficed to make Jesus the power he became. In order to succeed he must avail himself of the *Messiah-idea*, and offer himself to his countrymen as the fulfiller of Messianic hopes. The Genius of the new religion happening to be a Jew, no other pathway to influence was open. The claim to be Messiah might not help him all at once to become a world-power; but it was indispensable in order to His gaining a footing among his own people, and that was the necessary first step towards universal empire. The Messianic idea in itself was but a dream, and Jesus to a certain extent was aware of the fact; nevertheless it could not be ignored, for the Jewish nation earnestly believed in it. Any man seeking to influence decisively the Jewish mind must recognize the Messianic hope as a fact, and accom-

The
Messianic
idea.

According
to Baur
Jesus had to
accommodate
himself to
it.

moderate himself to it. If he aspired to be a supreme religious benefactor to the chosen race, he must even call himself the Messiah. In Judæa to say, "I bring to you the *summum bonum*," and to say, "I am the Messiah," were one and the same thing. In Baur's own words:

"Nothing of higher moment could happen on the soil of Jewish popular religious history which did not either connect itself with the Messiah idea, or was not introduced by it. Thus was indicated to Christianity the way which it had to take."¹

Two things
apparently
conflicting
meet, from
which
controversy
may arise.

Observe now what we have got. Jesus on the one hand teaches a religion universalistic in spirit—for all mankind, not for Jews alone; on the other He claims to be the Jewish Messiah. Two things thus meet in Him which may not be irreconcilable, but which wear a superficial aspect of antagonism that may easily give rise to contrariety of view and controversy. Some of those who espouse the new religion may emphasize the universalism of Christ's teaching, and others may attach chief importance to His Messiahship, and hence may come conflict. For the ultimate fortunes of the new religion this may not be a calamity. On Hegelian principles, indeed, it may confidently be expected to be the reverse; for according to these all progress and development proceed by conflict. From this point of view it is desirable that conflict as to the nature of Chris-

Conflict
desirable in
Hegelian
principles.

¹ *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, i. 37.

tianity should arise; the new movement will come to nothing unless it do arise. There need be no great fear on this score, as human beings generally do manage to get up controversies about matters in which they are deeply interested, especially in the sphere of religion. There may, however, be some difficulty in getting a worthy representative of the universalism of Christianity. The narrower view will look after itself, for the multitude incline to narrow ideas; but what if no effective advocate of a Gospel for the world should appear?

Here is one possible difficulty in the way of getting Christianity started on its career. Another An early difficulty. very serious one coming in at an earlier stage arises out of the death of Jesus. Must not that event be fatal to the cause? Yes, replies Dr. Baur, unless it can be got over somehow. It would effectually meet the difficulty if the dead one should rise again. That, however, from the Tübingen point of view is impossible, and the next best thing is that the disciples should persuade themselves that their Master has risen, which is happily not impossible. Faith in the resurrection will serve the same purpose as the resurrection How to surmount it. itself, give heart to the followers of Jesus to go forth as the apostles of the Christian religion.

What the eleven will preach may be guessed beforehand. They are all commonplace men, incapable of entering into the world-wide aims of

Who is to
represent
Universal-
ism.

their Lord. But where then are the representatives of Christian universalism to come from? By the nature of the case they must be few, for they must be superior men rising above the average level in genius, earnestness, and force, belonging to the aristocracy of humanity, the number of whom is always small. What if such rare men capable of being mouthpieces of universalism should not be forthcoming? Why then Christianity may come to nothing after all, for want of the antagonism which is the necessary condition of historical development. The risk is real; yet may we not fall back on the consoling thought that at every great crisis the needed man always makes his appearance, if not sent by the living God, then produced by the unconscious forces at work in the universe? However this may be, the fact is that one adequate representative of universalism did make his appearance in due season—we might say two indeed,—the first being *Stephen*, the second *Paul*. Stephen, however, was only a blossom nipped by persecution, so that of Paul alone need we take account.

Saul of
Tarsus.

That Saul of Tarsus, once a Pharisaic zealot and bitter opponent of Christianity, should be changed into a Christian, and *such* a Christian:—not merely a believer in Jesus as the Christ, but entering with all the enthusiasm of a passionate nature, and all the logical consistency of a powerful intellect, into

the universal aspect of Christ's teaching, treating that which had once been everything to him,—the Law, as nothing, and insisting that in Christ is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but only a new humanity, is a sufficiently remarkable phenomenon. It is one of the great difficulties which naturalistic criticism has to grapple with, for to account for Paul's conversion on naturalistic principles is a hard task. Baur, conscious of this, did not attempt to explain the fact, but left the unsolved problem to other more adventurous spirits. Enough for him that Paul the persecutor was converted somehow. In the converted Pharisee was at length provided what was needed to insure for Christianity a career. The opposing views are now furnished with advocates. In Paul, universalism has got a champion able single-handed to defend it against all comers. The Judaistic tendency on the other hand, as already hinted, has numerous if not equally able advocates in the eleven companions of Jesus. The state of the case is thus Paul versus the whole body of the original apostles—at least according to Dr. Baur.¹

His own
version

Un-
explained
by Baur.

Represent-
atives of
Judaism.

Paul and
the Eleven.

The
evidence of
the conflict

But what evidence is there of the alleged contrariety between the eleven on the one hand and Paul on the other, in their respective views of the Gospel? If such diversity existed there ought to

¹ Baur's views on Paul, his life, work, and writings, are set forth in his work : *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi*.

Alleged
conflict
between
Peter and
John.

Supposed
allusions to
St. Paul in
the
Revelations.

Paul and
Peter.

be clear traces of it in the New Testament. And the Tübingen critic tells us that there are, and undertakes to point them out. He finds in various places plain indications of conflict between Paul and at least two of the original apostles—the men of most influence, the pillars of the Church, viz., Peter and John. Of the opposition between Paul and John the proof is drawn from the Book of Revelation, which is regarded as the work of John the apostle, and as the only genuine Johannine writing in the New Testament. The Balaamites, Nicolaitanes, or followers of the woman Jezebel, who eat flesh offered to idols, are the members of the Pauline party in the churches of Asia Minor. The text, xxi. 14, in which the number twelve is applied to the apostles as corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel, evidently excludes Paul from the apostolate. When the Church of Ephesus is praised for testing some who called themselves apostles, and were not, Paul and his associates are obviously aimed at.

Of the opposition between Paul and Peter traces are found in the reference in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, to parties existing among them, one of which named itself after Paul, and another after Peter; and in the account given by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians of his collision with Peter at Antioch. Both these Epistles are held to be unquestionably of Pauline authorship, and

therefore absolutely trustworthy. The main stress of the argument turns on the passage in Galatians (ii. 11-21), and indeed we may say on the whole of the second chapter of that remarkable Epistle, from which it is inferred that Paul stood opposed not only to Peter but to the whole eleven. The "false brethren" (v. 4) are held to be the eleven. The phrases "those who seemed to be somewhat," "who seemed to be pillars," are taken to be sneering allusions to the esteem in which the eleven were held by the Judaistic party. The giving of the right hand of fellowship at the close of the conference, was, we are told, but a hollow truce between two irreconcilable parties, an agreement that each party should continue to hold its own views, and that they should divide the world between them. The subsequent scene at Antioch shows Peter standing on the platform of a Jewish-Christian halfness, binding together faith and the ceremonial law, and deeming the keeping of the law necessary to salvation though not of itself sufficient for salvation; and we are given to understand that the effect of Paul's energetic remonstrance was a permanent alienation between him and Peter, fruitful of evil consequences. One of the most grievous results was the rise of a Judaistic Anti-Pauline propagandism which assiduously carried on its operations in all the churches founded by the apostle of the Gentiles.

The scene
at Antioch
and its con-
sequences.

Alleged
anti-Pauline
Propa-
gandism.

2 Corinth-
ians and
Romans.

The alleged
origin of the
Epistle to
the Romans.

Traces of the alleged antagonism between Paul and the original apostles are discovered in the only two other epistles which, besides the above named, are recognised as Pauline, 2 *Corinthians* and *Romans*. In the former the expression "superlative apostles," apostles ever-so-much,¹ is held to be a sarcastic reference to the eleven. The Epistle to the Romans, though containing no express reference to parties in the Church, according to Baur, owed its origin to these. His theory is that Paul wrote the epistle to a Church he had not founded or visited, in which, therefore, he had no personal enemies, that he might in a didactic way give a full demonstration of his universalistic view of Christianity in opposition to Judaistic particularism. The kernel of the Epistle is thus to be found in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, in which the writer endeavours to adjust his Gentile Gospel to the prerogatives of the Jewish nation as an elect people.

Such is the evidence adduced in proof of irreconcilable, or at least serious antagonism between Paul and the Eleven, and the two great parties into which the Apostolic Church was divided, the universalist party having Paul at its head, and the Judaist party led by the former companions of Jesus. The subsequent course of events is sup-

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 5, τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων; "the chiefest apostles" in Authorized Version.

posed to have been this: After the controversy had raged fiercely for a time, the men of a later generation began to grow weary of strife, and to long for and aim at a reconciliation, in the belief that the opposing views were not so utterly incompatible as their fathers had imagined. And so it came to pass that the war of parties ceased, and the Catholic Church was formed by their union, and a composite creed framed, which blended together the watchwords of opposite camps. Thus the history of the Church for a hundred years, dating from the time of Paul, has three periods. First there is the period of controversy; second, the period during which the process of conciliation went on; third, the period when that process reached its completion.

The subsequent course of events.

Three periods.

According to the theory we are now expounding, all the books of the New Testament belong to one or other of these periods. One group sprang out of the great controversy, and express the views and passions of the combatants; a second group bear traces of being written under the influence of the spirit of conciliation; a third speak the thoughts of an age when union had been achieved, and the memory of past strife was fading away. All the writings without exception are supposed to betray the influence of a theological tendency; the only difference between them being the particular tendencies by which they are respectively animated.

New Testament books in relation to these.

Earliest
writings
contro-
versial.

First in time came the controversial group, embracing five books: the *Apocalypse*, written by the Apostle John, and the four Epistles of Paul, alone recognized as genuine, those to the *Galatian*, *Corinthian*, and *Roman* Churches. These books alone of all the books in the New Testament are held to be of apostolic authorship; and of course they were the earliest written, from the simple fact of their belonging to the period of controversy. An inexperienced person might naturally suggest that there was an earlier period still, that of Christ Himself, and ask why there should not have been earlier writings, telling in simple unsophisticated language the story of His life? But we are given to understand that no such books are to be found in the New Testament, not even in the case of the Gospels. They also are writings with a tendency, and relate the history of Jesus with a distinct colouring. Their proper place, in short, is in one of the next two groups.

Second
group con-
ciliatory.

The second group, wherein traces of the spirit of conciliation are discernible, is a much larger one than the first, embracing the first three, commonly called Synoptical, Gospels, Acts, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philip-pians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistles of James and Peter. The interest in connection with this group revolves chiefly around the historical books,—the Synoptical Gospels and the Acts of the

Apostles. With reference to these, the theory now under consideration undertakes to explain their respective rôles in the drama of reconciliation.

The first and third Gospels, which bear the names of Matthew and Luke, had for their authors men belonging to opposite parties, but each animated by a conciliatory spirit. The former was written by a Judaist, who told the story of our Lord's life so as to make it acceptable to Paulinists, and the latter by a Paulinist, who constructed his narrative in the same friendly spirit as towards Judaists, while contriving to make it tell very decisively in favour of Gentile Christianity. Both Gospels are based on older forms in which the life of Jesus was presented from partisan points of view: "Matthew," on a Gospel current among the Ebionites called the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*; "Luke," on the solitary Gospel acknowledged and used by Marcion, the Gnostic heretic, the contents of which we learn from a controversial work against Marcion by Tertullian. Tertullian's view as to this Gospel of Marcion's was that it was a mutilated edition of the canonical Luke, with everything omitted that savoured of Judaism, or was distasteful to a man who thought the Old Testament religion and Christianity so different that they could not proceed from the same God. The Tübingen theory inverts the state of the case, and maintains that Marcion's Gospel

The first
and third
Gospels.

Marcion's
Gospel.

was earlier than the canonical Luke; that in it the life of Christ was related with a strong Paulinist bias; and that at a later date a Paulinist, animated by a conciliatory aim, took it up, added to it, toned it down, and so made it palatable to Jewish tastes, while still retaining a strong flavour of universalism.

Mark's
Gospel.

As for the author of the second Gospel a very ignoble part is assigned to him. He is supposed to have had both the first and the third Gospels before him, and to have compiled his narrative in a spirit of neutrality, leaving out everything in either of his predecessors that leant too decidedly to either side. A book got up in this way ought to be a very dull uninteresting affair. But it so happens that Mark's narrative is particularly lively and graphic. In explanation of this we are told that the graphic element has been introduced to hide the poverty of an otherwise colourless recital.

Alleged
dates of the
Synoptic
Gospels.

It hardly needs to be stated that, according to Dr. Baur, the Synoptical Gospels, as we now have them, are all of comparatively late date. All books of a conciliatory tendency must have been post-apostolic. Luke's Gospel, if made up from that used by Marcion, cannot have been written much before A.D. 150, Marcion's date being about 140. *Matthew* is supposed to have been written some twenty years earlier than Luke, and *Mark* rather later than the middle of the second century.

The mode in which the theory deals with *The Acts of the Apostles* is very naïve. It is represented as an apologetic work, having for its aim to bring Judaists and Paulinists into fraternal relations, and adopting for this end the expedient of making Peter, the head of the Judaistic party, act as much as possible after the manner of Paul, and Paul, in the second part, as much as possible after the manner of Peter. The idea that the work had an apologetic aim had been previously promulgated by *Schneckenburger*,¹ who, however, had no intention of calling in question its historical reliableness, his view being that the aim of the writer influenced him only in the *selection* of his material. But in the hands of Dr. Baur what *Schneckenburger* called selection became *invention*. That some historical facts are contained in the book possibly derived from manuscripts of Luke he did not deny; but in many sections he saw nothing else than pure inventions to serve a purpose. He supposes the work to have been written at a time when the opposed parties, having already made considerable approximations, and being desirous of complete union, needed only to be told that the notion of a radical antagonism between Peter and Paul was a mistake, that in views and public action they were very much alike, and that there

The Acts of
the Apostles.

its
supposed
aim and
method.

¹ In a work on the aim of the Acts (*über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*. 1841).

had always been a good understanding between them. The book, he says,

"is the conciliatory effort and overture of peace of a Paulinist, who would purchase the recognition of Gentile Christianity by Jewish Christians, by concessions to Judaism in the name of his own party."¹

Examples.

Cornelius.

The Council
of
Jerusalem.

The story of
Simon
Magus.

It would be tedious to go into detail to illustrate the working out of this amiable programme. Suffice it to say that the story of Cornelius is supposed to be invented in order to represent Peter as equally with Paul a believer in the universal destination of the Gospel, and in the consequent antiquation of the ceremonial law. The account of the Council of Jerusalem was concocted to make it appear that on the question regarding circumcision, the elder apostles and Paul were in perfect accord. Even the story of Simon Magus is held to be an invention to meet a difficulty in the way of mediation. For the original of Simon Magus, we are assured, is the Apostle Paul. Under that name he figures in the *Clementines*, a writing proceeding from the Judaist party, and full of bitterness against Paul, who, under the disguise of Simon Magus, appears as the enemy of the Gospel, following in the footsteps of Peter, and striving to mar his work as an apostle. The author of *Acts* being acquainted with the Simon-myth, and aware how current it was, could not ignore it; but to neutralize its effect as

¹ *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 128.

a story fitted to perpetuate hostility against Paul, and stereotype existing alienations, he adopted the expedient of bringing the Apostle Peter and Simon Magus into contact before Paul appeared on the stage of history, to suggest the inference that the identification of Simon with Paul was another historical blunder!

The last group of New Testament writings, representing the period of completed reconciliation, embraces the *Pastoral Epistles*—those to Timothy and Titus, and the *Fourth Gospel*, and the *Epistles ascribed to John*. In common with the Epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians the Pastorals have for their task to deal with the difficulties in the way of the construction or consolidation of the Catholic Church arising from the heretical movements that were so rife in the second century, those especially associated with the name of the Gnostics. But they deal with the difficulty in another way. The Epistles to Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians deal with Gnostic error doctrinally, appropriating whatever was in affinity with Christianity and rejecting the rest. The Pastoral Epistles, on the other hand, deal with Gnostic error ecclesiastically, seeking to fortify the Church against heretical influence by the establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Church could not be strong as long as she was without an organization binding her into a compact body, and

The last group representing according to Baur, the period of completed reconciliation

Baur's view of the purpose of the Pastoral Epistles

the means of unity was found in the Episcopate; and the Pastorals are devoted to the task of erecting the Episcopal system. From this view of their origin it follows of course that these Epistles could not have been written by Paul, or indeed earlier than the middle of the second century,

The fourth Gospel.

Last in time, though not in importance, comes the *Fourth Gospel*. This book, according to Dr. Baur, was written by a *Christian Gnostic*, who in his idea of Christianity soared high above the antagonisms of the past, and welded them together into an indissoluble unity. In place of apostles contending together for sovereignty comes in this Gospel the Holy Spirit as the universal Christian principle common to both Peter and Paul, and the tendencies they represent. In the Johannine theology Judaism and Paulinism lose their distinctive features, and are merged in a higher unity. Faith, in the fourth Gospel, is a principle of fundamental importance not less than in the Pauline system; but the object of faith is not Christ's death, but Christ's person, Christ being viewed as the Logos incarnate, yea God Himself. Then in the fourth Gospel faith, however important, is still subordinate to love. Love is the highest idea in the Johannine theology. Then as for the Law, of which so much is said by Paul, and whose claims he shows himself so anxious to satisfy in his theory of salvation, in the fourth Gospel it is spoken of as something anti-

Features of this Gospel.

quoted, as something with which the Christian has nothing to do, and which has no claims to be considered. In love, faith and works find their higher unity, and lose their separate existence; and the particularism of Judaism, with all the antagonisms connected with it, disappears in the general contrast of the two opposed principles of Light and Darkness, which forms the background of the writer's theory of the universe. Thus this Gospel represents the final stage of the process of development in which the end returns to the beginning, giving instead of the immediate unity of opposites in Christ's teaching, a unity mediated by conflict, and all the richer on that account. The probable date of the Gospel is alleged to be between 160 and 170.

The alleged probable date of the Gospel.

Such in brief outline is the theory. In proceeding now to criticise this theory, it is unnecessary to say that we are fully sensible of its cleverness and boldness, and of the vast learning and infinite ingenuity with which it is supported. These are altogether very imposing and fascinating, and it takes a little time for the admiring reader of Dr. Baur's books to recover himself. But by and by it becomes apparent that the theory has many vulnerable points.

The theory outlined.

In the first place, while professedly historical and critical in its method, the theory is based upon two philosophical assumptions, one being that the miraculous is impossible, the other that all his-

Two philosophical assumptions.

torical development must proceed according to the laws of Hegelian logic. The former needs only to be stated; on the latter a few sentences of explanation may be offered.

Hegelianism
in form and
spirit.

In the foregoing exposition we have kept Hegelianism well in the background, partly that we might not trouble our readers with unfamiliar and repulsive phrases, and partly in justice to Dr. Baur; for it would not be fair to suggest or imply that he brought a cut and dry *a priori* philosophy to his task, and then proceeded to discover or invent facts which should make history square with foregone speculative conclusions. Nevertheless it is the simple truth that the Tübingen theory is Hegelian, not only in form but in spirit. The account given of the origin of Christianity is as completely dominated by the Hegelian law of development by antagonism as if the author had set himself this problem: "On the principles of Hegelianism the course taken by Christianity must have been as follows. In Christ, the founder of the new religion must meet two principles opposed to each other. In a subsequent stage these opposed principles must pass into a state of open conflict, each becoming the distinctive watchword of a party. Then, finally, the two principles must pass from a state of antagonism into a state of reconciliation, and become again, as at the commencement, united, constituting together in developed

The problem
to be solved
according
to Hegelian
principles.

form the faith of the Catholic Church. Find facts to verify this hypothesis."

The inevitable consequence of this philosophic bias is apparent in Baur's writings. The account given of the origin of Christianity and its canonical literature is not history, but a gross caricature. It is, to say the least, very improbable that the real course of history should follow so closely the requirements of a philosophical system. The attempt to make it appear as if it did, will almost certainly transform the actors in the historical drama into puppets, mouthpieces of tendencies, passive instruments of "the Idea." Such, indeed, is the well-known vice of the Hegelian method of handling history. Competent and even friendly critics have remarked that on that method historical characters are not real men, but ghostly generalities. Logic is the all-controlling power. Logical categories of the widest kind: Being in itself, Being for self, Being in and for self, the Indifference, the Difference, the Unity of the difference and the indifference, and so forth, take the place of the historical categories, and are so operated with, that history has all the blood sucked out of it, and historical characters become dead idea schemes.¹

Thus Christ Himself, in Baur's hands, becomes little more than a centre of unity for two opposed

The
Hegelian
mode of
handling
history.

What
Christ be-
comes in
Baur's
hands.

¹ So Schwartz, in a work on the history of recent German theology.

On his
theory
superhuman
elements in
the gospels
to be
rejected.

tendencies—the teacher of a universal ethical religion, and a claimant for the honours of Messiahship. Anything additional, putting more contents into the person and teaching of Jesus than suits the initial stage of development, must be reckoned spurious. If we find Jesus in any of the Gospels claiming to be a superhuman being, such texts may with the utmost confidence be set down as spurious. Such a thought could not possibly belong to the initial stage, but only to the final, when the human Messiah had developed into a Deity through the love and reverence of His followers. For the same reason all texts concerning the atoning significance of Christ's death must be relegated to a later time.

The Tübingen theorists are tendency critics.

In the same way, all the writers of the New Testament books become ghosts instead of living men. None of them are allowed to tell their story in good faith and natural simplicity. Every one of them must be the conscious constant mouth-piece of a theological tendency, either of the antagonisms, or of the conciliatory movement, or of the completed union. Paul must be a hot-headed universalist, John a bigoted Judaist, the writer of Acts the deliberate inventor of a historical romance intended to serve the purposes of conciliation, and so on through the whole list. In short, whatever be the truth as to the allegation that the New Testament books are all tendency-

writings, there can be no doubt that the Tübingen theorists are tendency critics, have tendency on the brain, so to speak; insomuch that one who has become familiar with their method can tell beforehand what they will say about any particular book.

Thus far of general characteristics. Let us now look at some points in detail, and first at the account given of the initial stage. Baur's representation of the teaching of Jesus is not altogether false. It is especially true in so far as it makes spirituality and universality essential characteristics of the Christian religion as exhibited by its Founder. These were indeed the grand features of the kingdom He proclaimed. But the theory errs in tracing these to Gentile sources. The political universalism of Rome, and the ethical subjectivity of Greece, did not give Jesus His doctrine, but merely prepared the world for receiving it. He was not a slavish debtor even to the Old Testament, either for these parts of His teaching, or for His doctrine of God. His great thoughts of the Divine Fatherhood, and of the dignity of man as God's son, and of the Kingdom of love have their roots in Old Testament prophecy. Nevertheless their marvellous originality is undeniable. As for the assertion that Jesus owed His ideal of human life to the Essenes, it is utterly baseless. In the first place, there is not the slightest trace of a historical connection between Him and the Essenes; in the second place, it is

The initial stage.

not the fact that His view of life is ascetic. The morality of the Gospel is heroic, abstinence being enjoined not as a virtue in itself, but as a sacrifice on the altar of devotion to the kingdom. The ideal of Christian character is not the monk, but the soldier. The two coincide in particular acts, but how diverse the spirit in which the same acts are performed !

That Jesus claimed to be the Messiah an important admission.

On the other hand, the assertion that Jesus claimed and accepted the title of Messiah is unquestionably true. It is an important admission on Dr. Baur's part, for it is fatal both to his theory and to that of Strauss. To the former, because a Messiah was required by public expectation to play the part of a miracle-worker in order to gain credence, a part not easy to play successfully, if miracles are impossible. To the latter, because, according to the mythical hypothesis, miraculous narratives are the product of faith in the Messiahship of Jesus, whereas if Jesus really claimed to be the Messiah, faith in His Messianic claims must have been the effect of miracles, real or reputed.

The alleged rise of two parties.

Passing now to the stage of controversy, when, according to the theory, two parties arose, one fighting for a Christianity which was merely a reformed Judaism, having for its creed that the man Jesus was the Christ; the other contending for a world-wide Christianity independent of Judaism—the point of importance here is, how far is the alleged contrariety between the original apostles and Paul

a matter of fact. Now the alleged radical antagonism is antecedently very improbable, even if only for the simple reason that the Eleven had been for years the companions of Jesus, the Teacher, Dr. Baur himself being witness, of a universal religion. Is it credible that the men who "had been with Jesus" so long, remained utterly insensible to the Master's spirit of catholic human sympathy, and to the universalistic genius of the new religious movement? That were to say that they were totally unworthy to be Christ's disciples, and that the careful training to which they had been subjected was a complete failure. Sensible of this, Ritschl, once himself an adherent of Dr. Baur's, speaks of it as historically impossible

Improbable
that the
eleven were
Judaists.

"that the view of the autonomy and universality of Christianity, which filled the inner life of Jesus, remained hid from His personal disciples."¹

But what of the proof adduced to show that, whatever might be *a priori* to be looked for, such contrariety did exist as matter of fact? Speaking generally, the interpretation put upon the texts cited must be pronounced strained. Such is the opinion even of theologians altogether free from orthodox bias, naturalistic in their philosophy, and followers of Baur to a certain extent. Keim, *e.g.*, entirely dissents from Baur's reading of the second chapter of *Galatians*, holding that the original

The proof
examined.

¹ *Die Entstehung der Altkatholischen Kirche*, p. 47.

Paul's
charge
against
Peter.

apostles did not insist on the circumcision of Gentile converts, and that it was owing to their generous and magnanimous bearing that the church was brought to accept the Jerusalem compact.¹ The scene at Antioch, read without bias, does not at all bear out the notion of an opposition in principle between Paul and Peter. What Paul charges his brother disciple with is not holding Judaistic opinions, but hypocrisy, inconsistency in conduct, through moral weakness, with his avowed principles, which as described by Paul are identical with his own. To call Peter a Judaist, on the ground of that passage, would be as unreasonable as to call him a traitor because through fear of man he denied a Master whom all the time he dearly loved. In both crises of his history Peter revealed the same moral weakness; in the earlier instance, denying his Lord through fear of the ridicule of servant-maids; in the latter, turning his back on Gentile Christians, with whom he had previously had no scruples in freely associating through fear of Judaistic bigots from Jerusalem.

Real differ-
ence
between
Paul and
the eleven.

If the attempted proof breaks down in the texts cited from the Epistle to the Galatians it is hardly worth while examining the weaker links in the chain of evidence taken from other places.

In denying the alleged Judaistic bias of Peter, James, John, and the rest of the Eleven, we do

¹ Vide *Aus dem Urchristenthum*; iv. *Der Apostel Konvent*.

not mean to say that they were enthusiastic advocates of Christian universalism, like Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. That they certainly were not. They passed through no intense religious experience like his, fitted to make them such. Their position was that of men brought gradually to acquiesce calmly though decidedly in the admission of Gentile believers to the full fellowship of the Church, on the sole ground of faith in Christ, apart from circumcision. They accepted the situation as the will of God clearly manifested by events, and as in accordance with the whole spirit of their Master's teaching. They did not, like Paul, throw themselves into the new situation with passionate earnestness. Therefore it was that they did not then at least desire to be apostles to the Gentiles. They felt that they were not fitted to become signally successful agents in that sphere. They humbly acknowledged that they were not called to that work. Their judgment was wise as well as honourable to themselves. For something more than acceptance of the situation is wanted in the apostles of a religious revolution. When the Christian faith took root in the Gentile city of Antioch, the good genial Barnabas knew that there was just one man who was supremely qualified to guide the movement. He went down to Tarsus to seek *Saul*.¹

Contrast between the experience of the eleven and the experience of Paul.

The eleven not fitted to be apostles to the Gentiles.

Saul supremely qualified for this office.

¹ Acts xi. 25.

Diverse
views in the
Apostolic
Church.

Another admission must be made. While serious conflict of opinion between Paul and the Eleven is denied, it is not denied that there were grave differences of opinion within the Church. But the apostles being at one, such contrariety of view can be regarded only as a fact of subordinate importance, wholly unfit to support a huge superstructure of criticism like that presented in the literature of the Tübingen theory. That criticism we must now briefly notice.

Tübingen
criticism of
New Testam-
ent
examined.

As already remarked, the general character of the Tübingen criticism of the New Testament books is, that it carries the hypothesis of tendency to extravagant lengths. Every writer must be the mouthpiece of some phase in the great dialectic movement, which is to have for its issue the creation of the Christian creed and of the Catholic Church. The penalty of all exaggeration is reaction, and accordingly the conclusions of the Tübingen criticism have been largely modified by later investigations as conducted by men untrammelled by orthodox traditions, such as Keim, Renan, Hilgenfeld, Pfleiderer. Recent critics, *e.g.*, are generally agreed that besides the four epistles recognized as genuine by Dr. Baur, a large proportion of the other epistles ascribed to Paul must be acknowledged to be genuine. Serious doubt, even in sceptical quarters; now hovers only over the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the pastoral Epistles.

Pauline
Epistles.

In like manner the historicity, the *bona fides*, and the artlessness of the Gospels, at least the Synoptics, receive from most recent inquirers an ampler homage. Dr. Baur himself recognized the comparative reliableness of *Matthew* as a source of information concerning the life and ministry of Jesus, so that little need be said on that topic. His views respecting *Mark* and *Luke* are now generally discredited. *Mark*, instead of being the latest, is now by most critics deemed the earliest of the Synoptical Gospels, and valued as a fresh vivid presentation of the leading scenes in the personal ministry, taken from the mouth of an eye-witness. The Tübingen view of *Luke*, according to which it is a revision of an earlier form of the Gospel known as Marcion's, is finally exploded. Even the author of *Supernatural Religion* confesses himself convinced by the reasoning of Dr. Sanday, in his thorough discussion of the question in his valuable work on *The Gospels in the Second Century*. When he yields the point, the most sceptical may be satisfied that there is no room for even plausible contention against the position that in the canonical *Luke* we have the original form of the third Gospel.

This Gospel, according to Dr. Baur, is to a very great extent influenced in its representation of the evangelic history by a Paulinist or Gentile bias. Proofs of this he finds in certain divergencies

The
Synoptic
Gospels,
Matthew
and Mark.

Luke.

Paulinistic
bias of
Luke.

Facts in
proof.

from Matthew, assumed to be the more trustworthy account. They are the following: Matthew knows only of one scene of Christ's ministry, Galilee; Luke tells of two ministries, one in Galilee, another in Samaria. Samaria represents the Gentile world, and the Samaritan mission is an invention. Besides the mission of the twelve, Luke relates the mission of the seventy, and, as if to make it appear the more important, he borrows from the earlier a large part of the instructions given to the Galilean evangelists, and attaches them to the later. The seventy represent the Gentile nations, supposed to be equal in number, and their mission is a pure invention to give the Gentile mission of later days a footing in the life of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, as reported in Matthew, is broken up by Luke and dispersed over his pages, as if to make the ordination of the twelve seem an event of little significance.

Facts
explained

These are plausibilities, but little more. As to the first it is not the intention of the third evangelist to relate a formal and elaborate ministry on Samaritan ground. The utmost that can be said is that he introduces some stray Samaritan incidents in themselves perfectly credible. A Paulinistic bias may have led him to introduce into his narrative these incidents found in his sources. If so, we should be thankful for his Paulinism, that is, his keen interest in Gentile

Christianity, to which we owe precious fragments that we should have been sorry to lose. The mission of the seventy has its difficulties, chiefly this, that it is not easy to make room and scope for it at the stage of the history at which it comes in. The best way of dealing with it is to treat it as not more, but less, important than the mission of the twelve; and to regard the distribution of the words of Jesus between the two missions as due to the way in which they were given in Luke's sources. Finally, the dispersion of the materials of the Sermon on the Mount raises the question: did Luke disperse or did Matthew collect? The one hypothesis is as legitimate as the other.

The opinion of dispassionate critics, who have no theory to make out, is that the third evangelist was a candid chronicler, who, in all good faith, made the best use of the materials at his command in the various documents to which he alludes at the beginning of his Gospel. He was certainly not a dry historian, who felt no religious interest in what he wrote. He rejoiced to believe that the Gospel of Jesus was emphatically a gospel of grace, and therefore a gospel for social outcasts and for Gentiles; and he was careful in the selection of his materials to make this conspicuous. Thereby his Gospel has only gained in spiritual value, without losing in historical reliableness.

The true
character
of this
Gospel.

The Acts of
the
Apostles.

A similar view is to be taken of the Acts of the Apostles, on good grounds regarded as of identical authorship with the third Gospel. The Tübingen view of this book stands or falls with the alleged antagonism between Peter and Paul. If there was no antagonism, then there was no need for invention to make Peter appear in his public conduct like Paul. The behaviour ascribed to Peter in the first part of the book, as, for example, in the story of Cornelius, then becomes quite natural and credible. The invention hypothesis is not in keeping with the reliable character of the book at those points in the narrative where we have it in our power to test its accuracy. Dr. Baur and his supporters, indeed, think otherwise, and endeavour to show that the statements of Acts, wherever they can be controlled, are altogether untrustworthy. Their chief instance is the narrative of the council at Jerusalem in Acts xv., which is declared to be utterly irreconcilable with Paul's statements in Galatians ii. Now we do not affirm that the harmonising of the two accounts presents no difficulties, but we do assert that there are no such differences as justify the position that the author of Acts has falsified history to present an aspect of agreement between the Eleven and Paul, which was not real. The historian speaks of a public meeting; the apostle of a private conference. It is intrinsically probable that there

Acts xv. and
Galatians ii.

were both in connection with a matter of grave importance; that neither writer should mention both is not surprising; that the historian should refer to the public meeting, and the apostle to the private conference, with whose proceedings only those present were conversant, and on whose proceedings his purpose in writing led him to lay special stress, was most natural. The historian knows of no difference of opinion between the Eleven and Paul; on the contrary, he represents Peter and James as taking the lead in bringing the meeting to adopt a resolution favourable to Gentile liberties. Paul says, that, after he had explained his view of the Gospel to the Eleven, or the leading men among them, they "added nothing" to him, that is, gave no additional instructions, did not treat his Gospel as defective and requiring supplement. They might have had their anxieties before conference, making explanations necessary; but the explanations given, Paul informs us, were deemed quite satisfactory. In view of these facts the verdict of Reuss seems thoroughly justified :

The
accounts
harmonized.

The
judgment
of Reuss.

"The author of the *Acts* merits not the reproach of having altered the facts to make them speak in favour of his view, but gliding more lightly over the opposition Paul encountered at Jerusalem, his aim was to insist more upon the result obtained; while Paul, pre-occupied with the need of raising the question to the height of principles, is led to insist more on the efforts required to vindicate principles."¹

Apologetic
theory of
the Book.

The apologetic theory of the book, as distinct from the invention hypothesis, is, whether true or false, at all events, quite legitimate. To assimilate, by *selection* of materials, the public conduct of Peter and Paul might conceivably be one aim of the writer. For though there was no radical contrariety between the views of Christianity held by the leaders of the Church, there certainly were two parties in the Church, and we can imagine the author of the *Acts* animated by a praiseworthy desire to make his narrative serve an irenical purpose. At the same time, we do not think that this motive exercised a very decisive influence on the composition of the book. That its author was guided by a particular interest, we have no doubt. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, as in the third Gospel, it is easy to recognise the influence of a desire to show that the Gospel was for mankind, not for Jews only. The writer is, with all his heart, a believer in Pauline universalism; but his interest therein is religious, not controversial. A Gentile himself, he is thankful to know that to the Gentiles God has granted eternal life, and he writes to a friend who shares the same sympathies. Even had there been no difference of opinion between Jewish and Gentile Christians as to the continued obligation of the law, he might have shown a not less lively interest in the great truth that through Christ had come into the world a

True view.

benefit for the whole human race; a religion forming the basis of a new humanity, and destined, in its onward course, to unite men into a holy brotherhood, having one Father in heaven, and one hope of eternal salvation. Surely it does not need the carnality of religious contention to invest such a truth with the power of awakening enthusiasm! Can we not conceive a Gentile Christian familiar with the history of the Apostolic Church, from its first beginnings in Jerusalem to its diffusion throughout Asia and Europe, tracing its steady advance, always keeping in view its ultimate destination as a religion for the whole earth, without having any other end in view than just to tell the thrilling story?

In connection with the *Fourth Gospel* we shall only notice very briefly what may be called the chief argument of Dr. Baur against Johannine authorship, based on internal evidence. It is drawn from the *Christology* of this Gospel.

Baur's
argument
from
internal
evidence.

The view of the person of Christ therein presented is held to be much too developed to be found in any writing emanating from an apostle. Baur recognises three distinct types of doctrine in the New Testament as to the import of Christianity in general, and the person of Christ in particular. The first type is that according to which Christianity is simply Judaism spiritualised, and Jesus the Messiah, Son of God in the Messianic sense,

Baur
recognizes
three types
of doctrine.

Spiritual-
ised
Judaism.

The Paul-
ine type.

The pseudo-
Johannine.

Two
questions
respecting
these.

and by His death, founder of a new covenant for the remission of sins. This type is represented by the Synoptic Gospels, and especially by *Matthew*. The second is that in which Christianity stands in opposition to the Law, and Christ is not only the Messiah, but the Lord of the community, object at once of Christian faith and worship, yet nothing more than a man, a man deified, the second Adam, the spiritual, heavenly man. This is the Pauline type of Christology. The third is that in which the opposition between Law and Gospel is lost in a higher unity, and Christ ceases to be a mere man, or even properly a man at all, but as the Logos is identified with the absolute essence of God. This is the type of Christology in the Fourth Gospel, and as the highest and most advanced must, it is held, have come last in the process of evolution. First an *Ebionitic* Christ, then a *Pauline*, then the *pseudo-Johannine*—such is the order; and it is maintained that John the Apostle, like all the eleven, must be conceived as belonging to the earliest Ebionitic stage.

We do not admit the accuracy of the above representation, especially as regards the Pauline Christology. But without going into that, two questions may be asked regarding these three types: 1. In what relation do they stand to Christ's own utterances concerning Himself; 2. Assuming a gradual growth in the conception

of Christ's person within the New Testament does the highest stage necessarily carry us beyond the apostolic age?

As to the first, the assumption of the Tübingen theorists is that all Christ's own utterances were of the least developed type. On this assumption we remark that it begs the question at issue, which is just this: is Christianity supernatural? is Christ a divine Being? If He be divine, as the Church Universal believes, then, it is quite credible that He uttered such sayings concerning Himself as we find in the fourth Gospel. But, it may be asked, why then are they found only there? The answer may be that the writer of the fourth Gospel had attained to a fuller understanding of Christ's doctrine. We are not entitled to assume that because Jesus taught as high a doctrine concerning Himself as we find in the fourth Gospel, therefore it must have been fully apprehended at the first, or equally apprehended by all who heard Him. It is quite conceivable, that, of those who heard Jesus speak of Himself, now as Son of Man, now as Son of God, some should regard Him mainly on the human side, some mainly on the divine.

Christ's utterances concerning His person.

As to the second question—can we conceive Christology assuming the developed form of the fourth Gospel within the apostolic generation?—we make the following observations. Let us assume that all the disciples were alike in their spiritual

The Christology of the Fourth Gospel.

The advantage of
St. John.

The influence of
Paul's writings
and thoughts on
John.

capacity, and that the difference perceptible in their writings was due to the educating effect of events and of time. Even on that hypothesis it is credible that the fourth Gospel proceeded from the Apostle John. According to the tradition of the early Church, he lived till near the close of the first century, and his Gospel was written later than all the others, and much later than Paul's Epistles. What wonder if we find in a Gospel written at so advanced a period a grasp of the "mystery of godliness," more comprehensive not only than that of the Synoptic Gospels, but even than that of Paul? Coming last the writer would have the benefit of the thoughts of those who went before. As we have seen that the alleged antagonism between Paul and the Eleven is not well founded, we can imagine John perusing with sympathetic spirit the writings of Paul, and receiving powerful stimulus from them. Then, apart from the direct influence of Paul's writings, the indirect effect of Paul's thoughts, current in the Church, must be taken into account as stimulating the evangelist's mind, and leading him to reflect on words of Christ, out of which could be educes a doctrine of Christ's person, higher even than that of Paul. Such an action of the faith of the Church on an individual mind, in quickening recollection and increasing appreciation of the teaching of our Lord concerning Himself, would be

only analogous to the known influence of events in bringing the Eleven to a cordial acquiescence in the proposal to admit the Gentiles to fellowship on equal terms. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that the ever-deepening reverence of believers for their Saviour and Lord on the one hand, and the contradictions of unbelief or false belief on the other, led the Apostle John to unfold the full meaning of a title—Son of God, which, at an earlier period, had been allowed to remain in germinal form; to unfold it not by speculative reflection chiefly, but by recording sayings of Jesus uttered in circumstances similar to those of the writer, viz., in presence of the contradictions of unbelief.

How the Apostle may have been led to unfold the meaning of the title—Son of God.

In these observations we have assumed the possibility of a growing advancement in the knowledge of Christ, even in the case of inspired apostles. There ought to be nothing objectionable in such a supposition to the most devout mind. Paul makes the confession, "now I know in part." All the apostles knew in part, and one might know more than another. The greater limitedness of one apostle's knowledge as compared with another, or of the same apostle's knowledge at one time as compared with another time, does not imply that error must be mixed up with the views of the less informed apostle. It only signifies that the pure light of Truth is broken up into the coloured

Apostolic growth in the knowledge of Christ.

rays of the prism, under the wise guidance of the Divine Spirit. We can conceive of an apostle who had not entered so fully into the mystery of our Lord's divinity as John, giving a very full lifelike picture of His humanity, without prejudice to His claim to be more than man. This is, in truth, the actual state of the case, as we see when we compare, say, the first Gospel with the fourth. Hints of the higher aspect of Christ's person are not wanting in the former; there is one text in particular of a markedly Johannine character. We refer to Matthew xi. 27: *All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.* Still, it is to the Fourth Gospel we must turn for the fully developed doctrine of our Lord's divinity. The Christ of Matthew is pre-eminently *the Son of Man*; the Christ of John is pre-eminently *the Son of God*.

The fully developed doctrine of our Lord's divinity in John.

Dates of the Gospels.

A word may here be said on the dates of the Gospels. The whole tendency of recent investigation has been to press these much further back than the position assigned to them by Dr. Baur. According to him the approximate dates are, of Matthew 130, of Luke 150, of Mark 150-160, of John 160-170. Competent judges of all schools now incline to place the Fourth Gospel at least as far back as the beginning of the second century,

and to assign to the Synoptical Gospels a considerably earlier origin.¹ It has been shown, from the very corrupt condition of the texts about the middle of the second century, that the Gospels must have been in circulation long before the time at which they are supposed by Dr. Baur to have come into existence. In connection with this line of argument, important service has been rendered by Dr. Sanday, in his excellent work on *The Gospels in the Second Century*, written in reply to *Supernatural Religion*. The effect of his book is to demonstrate, by means of textual criticism, that the Tübingen account of the origin of the Gospel cannot be true, and that the Tübingen construction of early Church history is a castle in the air. Other writers have done good service in the same line, among whom may be specially mentioned Zahn. In a work recently published on the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, this scholar, by a similar process of reasoning, arrives at the same conclusion as Dr. Sanday. Tatian's *Diatessaron* was a continuous narrative of our Lord's life constructed by selection from all the Gospels, John being specially drawn upon.² This fact has been ascer-

Dr.
Sanday's
reply to
*Super-
natural
Religion*.

Tatian's
Diatessaron.

¹ It is impossible to give the exact dates of the Gospels. The main point is that they belong to the apostolic age. The Synoptic Gospels were, according to all probability, not later than between 60 and 70 A.D. The probable date of the Fourth Gospel is between 80 and 90 A.D.

² Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*. Theil I., p. 247.

tained by the help of a commentary, written on Tatian's book by the ancient Father Ephraem the Syrian, which has been recently discovered and made the subject of learned study. Careful examination of Ephraem's work discloses the fact that the texts of the Gospel used by Tatian must have been in a very corrupt state, and the bearing of the fact on the question as to the dates of the Gospels is thus indicated by Zahn :

Zahn's
opinion as to
date of the
Gospels.

"Therefrom follows, in the first place, that between the autographs of the Evangelists, on the one hand, and those manuscripts which, at latest between 160 and 170, the author of the Syriac version in the East, and the author of the old Latin version in the West, and their Greek contemporaries, had in their hands, on the other, lay a history of the spread, emendation, and corruption of the Gospel texts covering a decade; so that in view of the history of the text opinions as to the origin of John's Gospel, such as Baur has expressed, must appear simply as madness. It follows further, that the element which remains the same in all copies of the originals and of the versions, amid all the variations that crept into the text between 150 and 160, must have been everywhere read at the beginning of the second century."

Summing
up.

To sum up, the points of our criticism are these :

1. The theory is the application of a philosophical system to Christianity with a foregone conclusion.
2. The exegetical basis of the theory does not stand examination.
3. The criticism of New Testament books associated with the theory, has in most cases failed to commend itself to the approval of impartial investigators.

4. The doctrine of "tendency" has been carried to extravagant lengths.

5. Many of the phenomena in the New Testament on which this doctrine rests are imaginary; and those which are not are for the most part susceptible of a simple explanation. Thus Luke's undoubted interest in Paulinism, or in a Gentile Christianity, is religious, not controversial.

Let us not conclude this critical estimate without acknowledging that good has come out of the promulgation of this famous theory. It has done service even by the thorough-going nature of its arguments and conclusions, which makes it an extreme example of the "rigour and vigour" characteristic of German theories in general. It is always something to be thankful for, when in any department of human knowledge, a hypothesis is adequately stated, defended, and worked out. If it turn out an error, it is an error to which full justice has been done, and which may be finally put aside. Then we have to thank Dr. Baur for provoking by his theory an immense amount of inquiry among the learned in connection with questions of vital moment, bearing on the origin of Christianity; inquiry which in many ways has been fruitful of valuable results. As Hume's scepticism awoke Kant out of dogmatic slumber, and thus indirectly gave birth to the *Criticism of Pure Reason*, a contribution of permanent value to the theory of

Conclusion.

The effect
of Baur's
theory on
the Church.

knowledge; so Baur's theory has roused the Christian Church to consider with increased carefulness the historical foundations of its faith, with the result, not of clearing away all difficulties, but certainly of adding to the strength of Christian conviction, and greatly narrowing the sphere of controversy. Once more, Dr. Baur, in advocating his peculiar views, incidentally directs attention to many Biblical phenomena of interest which had previously been overlooked, and which cast a fresh light on the books wherein they occur. The remark applies especially to the Gospel of Luke. Since the Tübingen theory was propounded, students of Scripture have seen, as they never saw before, the Pauline stamp on every page of that Gospel. For the accentuation of that one fact, both pulpit and pew owe a debt to the German theologian whose speculations have occupied our attention. For nothing is more fitted to make this Gospel a copious spring of grace, life, and salvation to the people, than that our preachers should perceive how thoroughly it is pervaded by Paul's spirit, and how truly it is, as Renan has said, "the Gospel of the sinful."

The Pauline
character of
Luke's
Gospel has
been more
clearly seen.

The Gospel
of the
sinful.

The burden
of the
whole New
Testament.

This Tract may fitly end with the statement of another truth which we have not learned from Dr. Baur. It is that the burden of the Third Gospel is the burden of the whole New Testament. These sacred writings are not a heap of confusion and

contradiction; on the contrary, amidst much that is distinctive, there is throughout essential harmony.

The
harmony of
the Sacred
writings.

They owe their origin severally to the needs and conflicts of the primitive Church, or particular sections of it, but the whole of the collection has one theme, God's gift of grace in Christ Jesus.

Their one
theme.

All the writers are deeply impressed with the conviction that with Christ a great good came into the world, and that his advent was an epoch-making event in the history of mankind. All regard that event as one in which all men have an interest, "good tidings of great joy," not for Jews only, but also for Gentiles. And the boon Christ brings, as conceived by all alike, is radically the same; reconciliation, peace on earth, between God and man, and between man and man. God as a gracious Father, receiving sinful unworthy men as His children, and men once alienated regarding each other as brethren. The benefit is indeed apprehended and exhibited under different aspects, not conflicting, but rather complementary, and tending, when combined, to show the riches of divine grace.

God as
Father,
men as
brethren.

In the Synoptical Gospels, it appears under the title of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, in accordance with our Lord's frequent though not exclusive mode of representation.

The
Kingdom
of God.

In Paul's Epistles, and especially in the four great Epistles to the Roman, Corinthian, and Galatian Churches, the gift of grace is named *the righteous-*

The right-
eousness of
God in
Paul's
Epistles.

Christianity
in contrast
to the
Levitical
religion.

The gift of
God as
eternal life.

The motto
to this
whole New
Testament.

ness of God, and aptly sets the gospel in contrast to legalism; the gospel offering the righteousness of God as a gift to faith, while legalism has for its aim a righteousness self-acquired. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the nature of Christianity is further illustrated by being viewed in relation to the Levitical religion. In this aspect, it is the religion of *unrestricted access to God*, in contrast to the Levitical system which kept men at a distance; the religion of "the better hope through which we draw nigh to God." Lastly, in John's Gospel, the gift of God is chiefly set forth as *eternal life*, conferred on all who receive Jesus as the Son of God. "He that hath the Son hath life," is the characteristic message of the fourth Evangelist. All the other writings of the New Testament are in full sympathy with the views set forth in those just named. Peter, James, and the John of the Apocalypse speak the same language as Paul and the four Evangelists. John, in his Gospel, writes: "the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This saying might be prefixed as a motto to the whole New Testament.

THE
AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
FOUR GOSPELS.

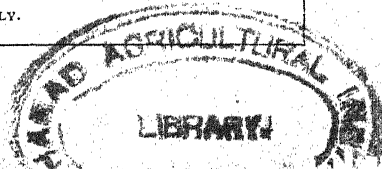
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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.



Argument of the Tract.

THE evidence furnished by the opening passage of the Acts of the Apostles to the authorship of the third Gospel, the internal evidence of the Acts to the personality of the author and the various circumstances which identify him as St. Luke are pointed out. The medical language which permeates both the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles is shown to confirm this conclusion. The admissions of M. Renan with reference to St. Luke's authorship of the books are adduced, and the value of them as embodying the conclusions of a hostile witness is indicated. St. Luke is shown to have had ample opportunities of instituting inquiries into the truth of the facts which he records, and a comparison between him and Tacitus as historians in this respect is instituted. The establishment of the authenticity of St. Luke's writings is shown to obviate practically the objections to the other three Gospels. Those Gospels are proved however to rest on sufficient evidence. The value of M. Renan's conclusions as invalidating the force of the objections of sceptical criticism is pointed out, and the admissions of distinguished negative critics are quoted with reference to their fundamental objection to the authenticity of the Gospels, namely, the fact that the writers record supernatural events.

THE
AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.



HIS is a question which during the present century has been discussed with the most intense eagerness. Perhaps there is no other on which such an amount of critical labour has been bestowed, or which in its various aspects has occasioned so much excitement. The controversy began at the latter part of the last century; it was brought to a crisis, which aroused anxiety throughout Europe, by the publication in the year 1835 of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. His criticism was succeeded by that of the Tübingen school, founded by Baur. The challenges thus offered to the faith of the Church were met by numerous and able theologians both in Germany and in this country; and every point in the argument has been contested with the utmost keenness. The prolonged and vehement character of this contest is certainly not disproportioned to its importance. Nothing can be of more consequence to Christians than to know whether they have good reason for their belief

The eagerness with which the question has been discussed.

The beginning of the controversy.

The importance of the controversy

The Gospels
not the sole
grounds of
our faith.

They alone
afford us full
information
respecting
our Lord's
character
and work.

The chief
positions of
scepticism
are over-
thrown if
they are
trustworthy.

All the
cardinal
questions of
religion
practically
answered if
they are
trustworthy.

that in the four Gospels they possess four faithful records of the life, the teaching, the death, and the resurrection of their Lord and Master. We are by no means, indeed, entirely dependent on those records for the grounds of our faith, since the Epistles of St. Paul, even if they stood alone, would afford strong testimony to the main facts respecting our Lord which are asserted in the Christian Creed. But the Gospels alone afford us full information respecting our Lord's character and work ; and they must ever be regarded as the most precious and important of testimonies to His claims.

It is this, indeed, which has led the sceptics and unbelievers of this century to direct such persistent and fierce attacks upon the Gospels. It has been felt that if they are trustworthy records of what our Lord said and did, the chief positions for which sceptics have contended are at once overthrown. Christ Himself bears witness in those Gospels to His own claims, to His supernatural powers, to all that Christians believe respecting Him. In fact, all cardinal questions of religion are practically answered if the Gospels can be trusted. Our Lord there bears overwhelming testimony to the existence and character of God, to the fact that we are now under God's government, and shall hereafter be judged by Him, and to the truth that He Himself can alone save us from our sins and their consequences. Accordingly, the simple facts of the

Gospel history were from the earliest moment the sum and substance of the Apostles' preaching. In the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we have a record of St. Peter's first address to a Gentile audience; and it is like a brief summary of one of our Gospels. He tells Cornelius "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with Him . . . whom they slew and hanged on a tree; Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; . . . and He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Such has ever been in substance the message of the Gospel. The chief question which has exercised the minds of men in our own time is whether the four records we possess of that Gospel can be relied upon.

The facts of Gospel history the sum and substance of the Apostles' preaching.

Can the Gospels be relied upon?

Now, if we wish to know whether any narrative or statement which we cannot ourselves verify is true, the first question to be asked is, On whose authority does it rest? Is it reported to us by persons who had the means of knowing the facts, and whose accounts can be trusted? If such accounts were written by contemporaries who

Were the writers well informed and trustworthy

either themselves witnessed the events narrated, or who were intimately associated with such eye-witnesses, we have the highest kind of evidence which in historical matters is possible. It will be necessary of course to inquire further into the honesty and good judgment of such writers; but the first and most important inquiry must be whether their evidence is that of contemporaries. This accordingly is the point which has been chiefly challenged by writers who wish to discredit the trustworthiness of the Gospels; and it is the main question to which we shall address ourselves. By whom were the Gospels written, and when? If there is good reason to believe that they were written by Apostles or intimate friends of Apostles, the main objections which have been raised to their credibility within this century will at once fall to the ground.

By whom
were the
Gospels
written, and
when?

Now, notwithstanding the elaborate character of the controversies which have been raised respecting this question, it will be found that the case can after all be very simply stated. It might be supposed, from the manner in which the problem is generally discussed by opponents of the Christian faith, that some elaborate and far-fetched argument is necessary in order to vindicate the received belief respecting the Gospels. There could not be a greater misapprehension. It is the case of our opponents that is marked by these characteristics;

The case a
very simple
one.

our own is perfectly straightforward and simple. The four Gospels bear upon their title-pages, as we should now say, the statement that they were written by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That is the way in which, from the earliest date, the words, "according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John," were understood. No suspicion can be shown to have been entertained by any writer of the first few centuries that these inscriptions had any other meaning, or that the meaning thus implied was untrue. Now, if in our own day a book appears with a name purporting to be that of the author on the title-page, and not a single doubt is expressed during his own lifetime or the lifetime of any of his friends as to the fact of his having written it, who would doubt that he had done so?

It is not merely with respect to modern books that this principle is acted upon; it is equally adopted with respect to ancient books. The works of Sophocles or Thucydides bear their names; and as the authorship was never doubted in ancient times, we accept it still, unless positive external or internal objections to the contrary can be adduced. But the burden of proof lies on those who urge such objections. If certain books have borne the names of certain authors unquestioned for centuries, we have a right to demand very cogent evidence from those who would have us reject this constant

The Gospels attributed to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

No doubt entertained as to the authorship in the first few centuries.

The burden of proof lies on objectors

The question is, Why should we not receive the primitive and accepted belief?

consent. In short, from the first moment they are heard of, these four books were accepted as the work of the writers whose names they bear. The question is not why should we believe that they were written by those persons; but why should we not believe it?

What the Gospels say for themselves.

But this is only a preliminary step. The most natural and the fairest course is to inquire, in the first place, what the Gospels say for themselves.

The writings of St. Luke.

It is reasonable to allow a witness to speak for himself before we listen to any evidence in opposition to him. Now it so happens that, although the authors of the four Gospels are singularly reticent respecting themselves, two at least of them have incidentally afforded us indications which, in the opinion of all critics, are extremely significant of their individuality and of their positions. This is peculiarly the case in respect to the Gospel of St. Luke; and it will be found the simplest introduction to this part of our subject, if we begin by considering the books which are attributed to him. For in this case we start with the advantage that we have two books on which to base our judgment, instead of one. The book of the Acts of the Apostles opens by a reference to a former book by the same author, and that reference, combined with internal evidence, leaves no practical doubt that this book was the Gospel according to St. Luke. "The former treatise have

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles refers to the Gospel by the same writer.

I made, O Theophilus," says the writer, "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up." But the Gospel according to St. Luke treats of the subject thus defined, and it is similarly addressed to Theophilus. It is moreover generally recognized, even by some of the chief rationalistic critics to whom reference will subsequently be made, that the two treatises are marked by a singular unity of style, idiom, and thought, that one mind conceived the two books, and one hand wrote them. If we can determine who was the author of one of them, we know the author of the other.

It is addressed to the same person.

The style of the two books is the same.

Now, the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles is revealed by one of those pieces of incidental evidence which, in a matter of this kind, are sometimes more convincing than direct statements. In the 16th chapter the writer is describing one of the journeys of St. Paul, and at first he speaks of St. Paul and his companions in the third person. Thus, in the 6th verse, he says "Now when *they* had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia . . . after *they* were come to Mysia, *they* assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not." A vision appeared to Paul in the night bidding him go over to Macedonia; and here the writer suddenly changes his expression, and begins to speak in the first person. In the 10th verse he proceeds, "And after he had seen

Internal evidence of authorship in the Acts of the Apostles.

Connection
of the
author of the
Acts of the
Apostles
with St.
Paul.

the vision, immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia." It is natural to conclude that at this point the writer joined St. Paul's company. He proceeds with him to Philippi; but appears to have remained there when St. Paul passed on to Amphipolis, as he resumes the third person at the commencement of chapter xvii. But in the 5th verse of chapter xx., where it is described how St. Paul again passed through Philippi when going through Macedonia on his final journey to Jerusalem, the writer begins again to speak of what "we" did. From that time he speaks as though he were constantly in St. Paul's company. He arrived at Jerusalem with him, and was received with him by St. James (xxi. 17, 18); and when St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea was terminated by his appeal to Cæsar, the writer accompanies him on his voyage, suffered shipwreck with him, and arrived with him at Rome (xxviii. 16).

References
in St. Paul's
Epistles to
his
companion.

Now from some references in St. Paul's Epistles, there remains no practical doubt who was the person thus associated with St. Paul. In Col. iv. 14, St. Paul sends a salutation from "Luke, the beloved physician;" in 2 Tim. iv. 11, he says, "only Luke is with me;" and at the end of the letter to Philemon, the salutation of Luke is added, among others, to that of St. Paul. St. Luke therefore was an intimate companion of the Apostle; and there is no other known companion to whom the

circumstances mentioned in the Acts are appropriate. Thus the internal evidence which is furnished by the third Gospel, by the Acts of the Apostles, and by St. Paul's Epistles, is in complete harmony with the tradition that St. Luke was the author of both the Gospel and the Acts. A further piece of very striking internal evidence has been added within the last year. St. Paul speaks of Luke as a physician, and it had already been observed that the descriptions of our Lord's miracles of healing in the third Gospel bear traces of the hand and eye of a medical observer. But an Irish scholar, the Rev. Dr. Hobart, published last year a full investigation of what he describes as *The Medical Language of St. Luke*,¹ and he points out the following facts: that we find running throughout the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles a number of words which were either distinctly medical terms, or commonly employed in medical language; that we find a constant use of the same compounds of simple words which the medical writers employ, and that these are for the most part peculiar to this author, or that he makes more frequent use of them than the other New Testament writers; that he alone uses the special medical terms for the distribution of nourishment, blood, nerves, etc., through the body, as well as the medical terms for

The evidence of the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistles in harmony with the tradition that St. Luke wrote the third Gospel and the Acts.

The evidence from the use of medical language.

¹ *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, by the Rev. W. K. Hobart, LL.D. London, 1882.

Medical language permeates the whole of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

'stimulation,' and to denote an intermittent or a failing pulse; that there are some words confined to St. Luke and the medical authors in the sense which they bear in his writings; and that the medical style of St. Luke accounts for the very frequent and peculiar use made by him of some words which were habitually employed, and were indeed almost indispensable, in the vocabulary of a physician. This peculiar phraseology, moreover, permeates the entire extent of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and thus adds a strong evidence of the integrity of those writings.

The circumstantial character of the evidence.

Here, then, we have the ancient tradition that St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, wrote our third Gospel corroborated by various convergent evidences of a very striking character. Now, it is only reasonable to ask that before evidence of this consistent nature is rejected, very clear objections to its validity should be established. No doubt the evidence is in the main circumstantial, and not demonstrative, and it is conceivable therefore that it might be refuted by counter evidence, or by strong objections based on its internal inconsistency. But it is important to observe that the burden of disproof is on the side of the objector; and he ought to be able to make out at least as clear a case on the other side before we can be asked to abandon conclusions which have such a weight of traditional and circumstantial evidence in their

Counter evidence should be equally clear and strong.

favour. This being premised, we proceed to inquire to what the objections amount.

• It fortunately happens that this inquiry may be very briefly satisfied. It would be equally tedious and unsatisfactory to pursue in detail the innumerable doubts which critics have urged on this subject. But if we are able to adduce a practically impartial estimate of the value of all these objections—an estimate not made by a believing theologian, but by a sceptical critic, who entirely rejects the main teaching of the Gospels as Christians believe it—in short, by one who is in every sense of the word an outside observer, we may feel satisfied that we are in possession of a fair measure of the force of the objections. Such an independent witness we can call upon in the person of M. Renan. The general character of his views respecting our Lord is well known. He entirely disbelieves in any miraculous occurrences, and assumes that whatever reports we have of them, in any historic document whatever, must by some means or other be explained away. He is, therefore, for our purposes, of even more value than a strictly impartial witness. He is a hostile witness; he is prejudiced beforehand against the literal trustworthiness of a document which contains accounts of miracles, and it would be an assistance to his argument if it could be shown that such a document was not the work of a person who had had access to contemporary evidence.

The
testimony
of M. Renan

M. Renan a
hostile
witness.

What, then, is the testimony of M. Renan? It will be found in the Preface to his *Vie de Jésus*, 15th edition, p. xlviii. The passage substantially corresponds to that portion of our argument which has hitherto occupied our attention. He says:—

M. Renan's
admissions.

"It is known that each of the four Gospels bears at its head the name of a personage known either in the apostolic history or in the evangelical history itself. It is clear that if these titles are correct, these Gospels, without ceasing to be partly legendary, assume a high value, since they enable us to go back to the half century which followed the life of Jesus, and even, in two cases, to eye-witnesses of his actions."

The reader will here notice M. Renan's position. He considers that parts of the Gospels must under any circumstances be regarded as legendary, and therefore, as we have observed, he cannot be prejudiced against criticism which would assign them to authors of a late date. But he proceeds—

The
character
and author-
ship of St.
Luke's
Gospel.

"As to Luke, doubt is scarcely possible. The Gospel of St. Luke is a regular composition, founded upon earlier documents. It is the work of an author who chooses, curtails, combines. The author of this Gospel is certainly the same as the author of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, the author of the Acts seems to be a companion of St. Paul,—a character which accords completely with St. Luke. I know that more than one objection may be opposed to this reasoning; but one thing at all events is beyond doubt, namely, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is a man who belonged to the second apostolic generation; and this suffices for our purpose. The date of this Gospel, moreover, may be determined with sufficient precision by considerations drawn from the book itself. The twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, which is inseparable from the rest of the work, was certainly written after the siege of Jerusalem, but not long after. We are, therefore, here on solid ground, for we are dealing with a work proceeding entirely from the same hand, and possessing the most complete unity."

Now, M. Renan's opinions as to the exact date of St. Luke's Gospel, whether a few years before, or a few years after the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and his prejudice respecting the legendary character of some of the narratives in the Gospel are clearly separable from his critical judgment as to the person by whom the Acts of the Apostles and the third Gospel were written. If he allows that those two books were written by a companion of St. Paul, who, beyond any reasonable doubt, was St. Luke, we may form our own opinions as to the conclusions to be deduced from this admission. But it may be important to observe that the admission has been supported by M. Renan's further investigations, as expressed in his subsequent volume on *The Apostles*. In the Preface to that volume he discusses fully the nature and value of the narrative contained in the Acts of the Apostles, and he pronounces the following decided opinions as to the authorship of that book, and its connection with the Gospel of St. Luke (p. x., *sq.*) —

M. Renan's critical judgment as to authorship separable from his opinions and prejudices on other points.

His discussion on the Acts of the Apostles.

"One point which is beyond question is that the Acts are by the same author as the third Gospel, and are a continuation of that Gospel. One need not stop to prove this proposition, which has never been seriously contested. The prefaces at the commencement of each work, the dedication of each to Theophilus, the perfect resemblance of style and of ideas furnish on this point abundant demonstrations.

The Acts of the Apostles a continuation of the third Gospel

"A second proposition, which has not the same certainty, but which may, however, be regarded as extremely probable, is that the author of the Acts is a disciple of Paul, who accompanied him for a considerable part of his travels."

The author of the Acts a disciple and companion of St. Paul.

The argument from the author's use of the pronoun "we" in the Acts of the Apostles.

At a first glance, M. Renan observes, this proposition appears indubitable, from the fact that the author, on so many occasions, uses the pronoun "we," indicating that on those occasions he was one of the apostolic band by whom St. Paul was accompanied. "One may even be astonished that a proposition apparently so evident should have found persons to contest it." He notices, however, the difficulties which have been raised on the point, and then proceeds as follows (p. xiv.)—

"Must we be checked by these objections? I think not; and I persist in believing that the person who finally prepared the Acts is really the disciple of Paul, who says 'we' in the last chapters. All difficulties, however insoluble they may appear, ought to be, if not dismissed, at least held in suspense, by an argument so decisive as that which results from the use of this word 'we.'"

Manuscript evidence and tradition combine in assigning the third Gospel to St. Luke.

He then observes that MSS. and tradition combine in assigning the third Gospel to a certain Luke, and that it is scarcely conceivable that a name in other respects obscure should have been attributed to so important a work for any other reason than that it was the name of the real author. Luke, he says, had no place in tradition, in legend or in history when these two treatises were ascribed to him. M. Renan concludes in the following words:

"We think, therefore, that the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts is in all reality Luke, the disciple of Paul."

M. Renan's conclusion.

Now let the import of these expressions of opinion be duly weighed. Of course M. Renan's

judgments are not to be regarded as affording in themselves any adequate basis for our acceptance of the authenticity of the chief books of the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles and the four Gospels bear on their face certain positive claims, on the faith of which they have been accepted in all ages of the Church, and they do not appeal, in the first instance, to the authority of any modern critic. But though M. Renan would be a very unsatisfactory witness to rely upon for the purpose of positive testimony to the Gospels, it will be acknowledged that his estimates of the value of modern critical objections to those sacred books have all the weight of the admissions of a hostile witness. No one doubts his perfect familiarity with the whole range of the criticism represented by such names as Strauss and Baur, and no one questions his disposition to give full weight to every objection which that criticism can urge. Even without assuming that he is prejudiced on either one side or the other, it will be admitted on all hands that he is more favourably disposed than otherwise to such criticism as we have to meet. When, therefore, with this full knowledge of the literature of the subject, such a writer comes to the conclusion that the criticism in question has entirely failed to make good its case on a point like that of the authorship of St. Luke's Gospel, we are at least justified in concluding that critical objec-

The value of
M. Renan's
judgments.

They have
the weight
of the
admissions
of a hostile
witness.

M. Renan
no adequate
witness to
the Gospels,
but a
significant
witness to
the value of
modern
critical
objections to
them.

tions do not possess the weight which unbelievers or sceptics are wont to assign to them. M. Renan, in a word, is no adequate witness to the Gospels; but he is a very significant witness as to the value of modern critical objections to them.

To illustrate our meaning, let us take a definite example. Less than four years ago the author of the work entitled *Supernatural Religion*, published what he described as his "complete edition," which he had carefully revised throughout. This work was received with great acclamation by the chief literary representatives of sceptical opinions, and its statements were widely quoted as embodying the final results of impartial criticism. In its first edition the author had maintained that there was no evidence of our present third Gospel being in existence before the time when Marcion the heretic, who flourished about the year 140, put forth a Gospel to suit his peculiar views. The author of *Supernatural Religion* maintained through several editions that Marcion's Gospel was the original, and that our third Gospel was expanded from it. This view, however, he has been compelled to abandon by the researches of Dr. Sanday; and he now admits "that our third Synoptic existed in Marcion's time;" so that we find evidence of its existence "about the year 140, and it may of course be inferred that it must have been composed at least some time before that date."

Admission
of the
author of
*Super-
natural
Religion*.

This is not the only point, as we shall see, on which this writer had to abandon positions which he had asserted with the utmost assurance. But although thus compelled to surrender an important point in his argument, he still asserts (vol. III., p. 39) that "there is no evidence whatever that this Luke had been a travelling companion of Paul, or that he ever wrote a line concerning him or had composed a Gospel." We are further told (p. 50) that "a very large mass of the ablest critics have concluded that the 'we' sections were not composed by the author of the rest of the Acts . . . and that the general writer of the work, and consequently of the third Gospel, was not Luke at all."

His
confident
assertions.

Still more positively it is laid down that—

"a careful study of the contents of the Acts cannot, we think, leave any doubt that the work could not have been written by any companion or intimate friend of the Apostle Paul."

Such language would naturally lead the reader to suppose that there was a substantial agreement of independent critics in favour of these conclusions, and that none but uncritical supporters of "traditional" views adhered to the old beliefs. But we have called a witness whose admissions on this point have an unimpeachable value, to prove that criticism has established no such negative conclusions. In the face of it all, M. Renan "persists in believing" that the Acts were written, in the form we now possess them, by a companion of

Negative
conclusions
not
established.

The positive testimony in respect of the third Gospel has every claim to be accepted.

The objections to the authenticity of the other Gospels practically obviated by the establishment of St. Luke's authorship of the third.

St. Paul, and that this companion was no other than St. Luke, who was also the writer of the third Gospel. We are justified, in view of this testimony, in concluding that the critical objections are not only destitute of any such positive, scientific, and convincing character as is sometimes claimed for them, but that such weight as they possess is entirely counterbalanced by other critical considerations. In other words, there is nothing left in respect of the third Gospel to weigh against the positive testimony of all ancient authorities, and that testimony therefore has every claim to be accepted.

We have thus arrived at this conclusion,—that the third Gospel was really written, in the form in which we now possess it, by St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul in several of his journeys, and particularly on his last visit to Jerusalem and in his subsequent journey to Rome. Now this one point being established, it will be found that all serious objections to the belief of the Church respecting the authenticity of the other Gospels are practically obviated. For it follows that the claim put forward in the preface to the third Gospel is completely justified. St. Luke was not indeed himself an eye-witness of our Lord's life on earth; but he claims to have had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first;" or, as the Revisers render the phrase, to have

"traced the course of all things accurately from the very first." St. Paul, in his intercourse with the Apostles, must have been fully informed of the teaching and the acts of our Lord during His ministry, and through St. Paul, St. Luke must have been similarly cognisant of them. But in his visit with St. Paul to Jerusalem, St. Luke himself must have been in communication with other Apostles, as well as with many other disciples of our Lord who had "accompanied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them." That visit to Jerusalem was about twenty-five years after the crucifixion, when those who had been the actual contemporaries of our Lord were from fifty to sixty years of age, in full possession of their faculties, with their memory still clear and their judgment vigorous. St. Luke must have had abundant opportunities in such company of following up, as he says he did, everything from the very first. "Many," he says, had already taken in hand to set forth in order a narrative of the same facts "even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." These written narratives he was in a position to test, to complete, and to arrange in better order, by personal inquiry of the same or other "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." If, therefore, he was a faithful historian, that which he has recorded for

The sources
of St. Luke's
knowledge
of our
Lord's life

The date of
his visit to
Jerusalem.

His oppor-
tunities of
verifying
the written
narratives
existing.

His evidence
was at first
hand.

us is the sifted and well-arranged testimony of eye-witnesses : it is the result of a mass of evidence at first hand.

Comparison
of the
evidence of
St. Luke's
Gospel with
the evidence
on which we
believe the
Annals of
Tacitus.

Now we may well ask whether any better ground for our belief than this could well have been afforded us. All the evidence we can obtain, with respect to the great mass of historical events, is the account of them by some historian who lived at or near the time of their occurrence, and who had reports of them either at first or second hand. This, for instance, is the evidence on which we believe the Annals of Tacitus. He was born somewhat before the year 60 A.D., and narrates the history of the years from A.D. 14-68, of which the first forty were before he was born. He was not, therefore, a contemporary of the greater part of the events he narrates, while St. Luke was. But like St. Luke, he had opportunities of ascertaining the facts from eye-witnesses, and as his writings produce the impression that he was a truthful person, of sound judgment, we accept his testimony.

The
guarantees
of a
historian's
trustworthi-
ness.

But it must be observed that for the greater part of the narratives in Tacitus we have no such guarantee as is afforded us by the facts above established respecting St. Luke. What is the utmost guarantee of truth that we could expect from any historian? Surely that, being a contemporary of the events he narrates, he should visit the country and the very spots in which they

are alleged to have occurred, that he should be acquainted with reports of them already committed to writing, that he should be well acquainted with many persons who actually witnessed them, that he should possess the full confidence of such persons, and that he should take pains to make a thorough inquiry into the facts. Very few historians indeed have had the opportunity of fulfilling these requirements. Tacitus, for instance, had no such opportunities for a great part of the events he narrates. But St. Luke had those opportunities in the fullest degree, and he assures us simply and straightforwardly in the preface to his Gospel that he made a diligent use of them. The result of such considerations is that in St. Luke's Gospel we possess an account of our Lord's birth, ministry, passion, and resurrection, which embodies the harmonious evidence of eye-witnesses, and which preserves for us the best contemporary evidence which was attainable.

St. Luke fulfilled the necessary requirements.

His Gospel preserves for us the best attainable contemporary evidence.

But it will readily be seen that if the authenticity and credibility of one Gospel is thus clearly established, the inquiry which remains respecting the authenticity and credibility of the other three is immensely simplified. With respect, at least, to the first two Gospels there would seem to remain no sufficient reason why any sceptical critic should trouble himself to dispute their authenticity. For it is unquestionable that they tell substantially the

No sufficient reason remains for disputing the authenticity of the two first Gospels.

Difficulties
in detail.

same story as is told in the third Gospel. There are indeed some points of detail on which it has been found difficult to harmonize them. It is unnecessary for our present argument to discuss these minor difficulties. They are of importance in respect to the relation of the Gospels to one another, and they have also important bearings upon the question of the character of the inspiration which Christians believe was vouchsafed to the writers. But, at the very utmost, they amount to no more than the discrepancies which, as we are reminded every day by discussions respecting the biographies of men recently deceased, continually arise between the accounts of truthful contemporaries and eye-witnesses. We are not here admitting that such apparent discrepancies in the Gospels are real. We only say that, even if they exist, they are of such a minor character as not to affect materially the substantial harmony of the narratives, or to impair their general trustworthiness. But from this it follows that if any one of the first three Gospels was written by a contemporary, and is a record of contemporary evidence, both the others might be. If criticism can adduce no sufficient reason why the third Gospel should not be, as it purports to be, written by St. Luke, it can hardly be worth its while to expend much subtlety in disputing the tradition that the first Gospel was written by St. Matthew,

Apparent
discrepan-
cies do not
affect the
substantial
harmony or
general
trustworthi-
ness of the
Gospels.

and the second by St. Mark. St. Luke's Gospel, we have seen, is a record of the accounts current among Apostles and contemporaries of our Lord respecting His ministry. Consequently, it is only to be expected that other records written by members of the same company, at about the same period, should be substantially of the same character. One positive piece of evidence suffices to outweigh any number of mere doubts and objections. In view of what has been said, we are forced to the conclusion that the story told by St. Luke is the story which was harmoniously told by the contemporaries of our Lord in Palestine. If so, there is at least no reason arising out of the story itself why St. Matthew and St. Mark should not have written the two Gospels attributed to them.

Other contemporary records likely to be substantially similar to St. Luke.

But of course in the interests of the Christian faith, and for the purposes of Christian instruction, it is of the highest interest and importance to know whether the objections which have been raised against the authenticity of the Gospels attributed to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John can be sustained; and with respect to the two former Gospels this question may be dealt with even more simply and briefly than in the case of St. Luke. Here again, it is only reasonable to start from the uniform tradition of the earliest ages on the subject. As is said by Holtzmann,¹ a rationalistic critic,

But it is important to examine objections to the other Gospels.

¹ *Die Synoptischen Evangelien*, p. 359.

Holtzmann's
admission
about
St. Matthew.

"The first canonical Gospel was entirely and unanimously attributed by the ancient Church to the Apostle Matthew."

As the same critic observes, this is the more remarkable, since there is nothing in what is otherwise known of Matthew to account for the first Gospel being attributed to him (p. 360):—

"That the early Church must have had some ground in facts for referring the first Gospel to this name must seem the more probable, since, with this exception, the person of Matthew is entirely in the background in the history of the apostolic age."

Presumptive
evidence of
the author-
ship of the
first Gospel.

In other words there was no reason why it should have been believed that St. Matthew wrote the Gospel except that he did write it; and therefore, as has been urged before, the tradition has, on the face of it, a claim to be believed in the absence of evidence to the contrary. But, in the first place, there is positive evidence to the fact that St. Matthew did write a work of the general character of our Gospel. There is one valuable piece of early Christian testimony preserved to us respecting the authorship of the two first Gospels. It is contained in a fragment of a work by Papias, who was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, in the first half of the second century, and who was a hearer of the Apostle St. John. It is natural that we should have but little discussion of the authorship of the New Testament writings in early times, if they were really genuine. Christians in such case would accept them without hesitation; and it

The
testimony of
Papias.

would be only as time went on, and heresies arose, or the Church came into conflict with heathen culture, that doubts on this subject would be raised. The evidence of Papias is therefore particularly welcome, and it has been scrutinized, by believers and unbelievers alike, with the utmost keenness. With respect to St. Matthew, he is quoted by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. iii. 39), as saying that

"Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew tongue, and each one interpreted them as he could."

His testimony has reference to the whole Gospel.

There has been much dispute as to the exact meaning of the term "oracles," here used. Some writers have endeavoured to make out that it is only applicable to sayings or discourses; and that consequently the work by St. Matthew which was known to Papias can only have been a collection of our Lord's sayings, and cannot have been a narrative of His ministry, like our present Gospel. Even if this restricted interpretation of the word could be maintained, it would be evidently pressing the argument too far to assume that such a collection excluded all narratives of facts; but it has been conclusively shown that the word bears no such narrow meaning. It is the same word as is used by St. Paul when he says (Rom. iii. 1) that the Jews had the keeping of the oracles of God, by which he evidently means the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole, including the narrative books. At the utmost, the fact that St. Matthew reports with special prominence and

It includes the narratives as well as the discourses.

Two facts to start with concerning St. Matthew's Gospel.

The conclusion from the facts specified.

The second Gospel unanimously attributed to St. Mark in the early centuries.

fulness several of our Lord's discourses would be sufficient to answer the meaning of such an expression. Thus we have two positive facts from which to start—the one, the fact that our first Gospel was uniformly attributed to St. Matthew from the earliest times; the other, the express statement of a disciple of St. John that St. Matthew wrote a work of this kind. Whether St. Matthew, besides writing the original Gospel in Hebrew, subsequently translated it himself into Greek, or whether our present Gospel is another work of the same kind which the Apostle also wrote, are secondary points. From these two facts it is reasonable to accept our first Gospel as St. Matthew's work, in the absence of decisive critical objections. Before considering the value of such objections, we will next inquire what positive evidence we have respecting the Gospel of St. Mark.

Here again, there is absolute unanimity in the belief of the earliest times. No doubt was expressed for long centuries as to the truth of the title which attributed the second Gospel to St. Mark. This person is generally acknowledged to be the same as the "John, whose surname was Mark," mentioned several times in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as in the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter. He was the cousin of Barnabas, and is called by St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 13), "My son," perhaps as having been converted by him. His mother

was the Mary in whose house in Jerusalem the Christians are described as meeting in the earliest days after the foundation of the Church (Acts xii. 12). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey; and though there was a temporary separation between him and St. Paul, he is afterwards mentioned by that apostle as one of his most valued attendants. At another time, as we have seen, he was with St. Peter, and Papias tells us that he acted as St. Peter's interpreter. He was, therefore, at least as much as St. Luke, in a position to ascertain the truth respecting our Lord's ministry. In his case also the tradition of antiquity is supported by the evidence of Papias. That writer related that "the elder," who was either St. John the Apostle or a presbyter contemporary with the Apostle, gave him the following account:—

St. Mark the companion of Paul and Barnabas.

St. Mark the interpreter of St. Peter.

"Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but, afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles [or discourses]. So, then, Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things, as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein."¹

The testimony of Papias concerning St. Mark.

¹ We have availed ourselves of Bishop Lightfoot's translations, given in his article on "Papias," in the *Contemporary Review* for August, 1875.

Appeal to
M. Renan.

Now, if these statements of Papias apply to our present Gospels, they furnish invaluable evidence as to their early date and as to their authorship. Once more we will ask M. Renan to tell us how far in his opinion the criticism by which this applicability is disputed has made out its case. In his Preface to his *Life of Jesus* (p. li.), after reciting the testimony of Papias, he says,—

“It is certain that these two descriptions correspond well enough to the general physiognomy of the two books, now called ‘The Gospel according to Matthew,’ and ‘The Gospel according to Mark,’—the first being characterized by its long discourses; the second being specially anecdotic, much more exact than the first in the details, brief to the extent of dryness, poor in discourses, and but ill put together.”

His
conclusions
respecting
additions to
St. Mat-
thew's and
St. Mark's
Gospels un-
warranted.

This surely is sufficient for practical purposes; and considering the slightness of the account of Papias, such a general correspondence as is here admitted would seem as much as could be required. M. Renan, however, goes on to lay upon Papias's words that undue stress already noticed, and to argue that the work of St. Matthew which Papias had before him can only have contained discourses, and that therefore subsequent additions must have been made to it, out of which our present Gospel has arisen; while, on the other hand, additions have been made to the original St. Mark, in order to supply its omissions, and to make it more like St. Matthew's work. Of any such revision of the original forms of these two Gospels there is not a single trace

of external evidence, nor does M. Renan pretend to produce any; and the best means of estimating the weight to be attached to such a suggestion is afforded by further conclusions expressed by himself. As the result of his inquiries into the value of the four Gospels he expresses himself as follows:

No external evidence of such revision.

"To sum up, I admit the four canonical Gospels as serious documents. All go back to the age which followed the death of Jesus. But their historical value is very diverse. St. Matthew evidently deserves peculiar confidence for the discourses. Here are 'the oracles,' the very notes taken while the memory of the instruction of Jesus was living and definite. A kind of flashing brightness at once sweet and terrible, a Divine force, if I may so say, underlines these words, detaches them from the context, and renders them easily recognisable by the critic" (p. lxxxi.).

The value of the Four Gospels according to M. Renan.

St. Matthew deserves 'une confiance hors ligne' for our Lord's discourses.

Now, we ask with what reason it can be maintained that a Gospel like that of St. Matthew deserves "peculiar confidence" in its most characteristic and most vital elements, but that this confidence is at once to be withdrawn from it wherever a critic like M. Renan fails to appreciate the importance or the vividness of its observations. If a witness comes into court, and is found to be absolutely trustworthy in a vital and characteristic portion of his evidence, would it be deemed reasonable to say that he is not to be believed in the other part of his evidence because you do not like it, or do not understand it? Let us take a particular instance. That from which M. Renan and all sceptical critics shrink in the Gospel narratives is, as we shall have further occasion to observe, their mira-

The miraculous element in the Gospel narrative offends M. Renan and sceptical critics generally.

The miraculous narratives in the 8th and 9th chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Following the Sermon on the Mount in a record marked by unity of design they must be trustworthy.

culous element. Now, the eighth and ninth chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel contain a record of ten of our Lord's miracles, and these are one half of the whole number recorded by that Evangelist. But this record of all these works of supernatural power and mercy immediately follows the Sermon on the Mount. In the three chapters preceding this miraculous record, St. Matthew has preserved to us, with a vividness and force of which the most sceptical are sensible, a long discourse by our Lord of the most momentous import, which is universally felt to embody some of his most characteristic teaching. Now, is it not a strange paradox to suppose that in a record which is marked, as almost all admit, by a substantial unity of design, we should pass immediately from such teaching as that of the Sermon on the Mount to a similarly long narrative of wholly untrustworthy reminiscences? In the one passage, we are surrounded with a blaze of moral and spiritual light, piercing to the very thoughts and intents of the heart, burning up all falsehood in word or deed, all hypocrisy and unreality; and in the next passage we are asked to believe that we find ourselves in an atmosphere of illusion, credulity, and uncertainty. Such a transition from absolute light—light undimmed, unobscured by a single shadow, unperverted by a single false colour, may well be regarded as inconceivable. But it is the same throughout the Gospels. Many of our Lord's most

precious sayings are inseparably bound up with His miracles, arise out of them, and point their lessons. The two are indissolubly united; and the Sermon on the Mount is thus itself the best guarantee for the miraculous narratives which immediately follow it.

The words and acts of our Lord inseparably connected

See *The Gospel and its Witnesses* by the author of this Tract, Lecture V.

In short, when M. Renan allows that Papias's language corresponds "very fairly" (*assez bien*) to our present Gospel of St. Matthew, and that the discourses, at all events, in that Gospel deserve "peculiar confidence," he at any rate justifies us in concluding that criticism can make out no such case against the authenticity and credibility of the book as deserves to be put in the balance against the unanimous external evidence in its favour. But with respect to the Gospel of St. Mark, his admissions are even more striking and decisive.

No case made out against the authenticity and credibility of St. Matthew's Gospel.

"The Gospel of St. Mark," he says (p. lxxxii.), "is the one of the three first which has remained the most ancient, the most original, and to which the least of later additions have been made. The details of fact possess in St. Mark a definiteness which we seek in vain in the other Evangelists. He is fond of reporting certain sayings of our Lord in Syro-Chaldaic. He is full of minute observations, proceeding, beyond doubt, from an eye-witness. There is nothing to conflict with the supposition that this eye-witness, who had evidently followed Jesus, who had loved Him and watched Him in close intimacy, and who had preserved a vivid image of Him, was the Apostle Peter himself, as Papias has it."

What is this but to say that criticism has failed to establish any valid objections against the traditional belief of the Church, that the Gospel of

Nor against St. Mark's authorship of the second Gospel.

St. Mark is the book of which Papias spoke as having been written by St. Mark from the narratives of St. Peter, and that it contains the very reminiscences of that apostle?

General estimate of the value of modern critical objections to the authenticity of the Gospels.

Let us, then, consider what is the general result of this review of the evidence for our first three Gospels, and of the validity of modern critical objections, as estimated by the most famous sceptical critic of our generation. M. Renan, with all these objections before him, being as well qualified by his learning as any scholar, whether in this country or abroad, to judge of such criticism, and being necessarily predisposed by his disbelief of Christian truths in favour of objections against the credibility of the sacred writings, nevertheless finds himself obliged to come to the conclusion that the old traditions respecting the first three Gospels are at least substantially true. He admits that all four Gospels were written in the age following the death of our Lord, and therefore while many of His contemporaries were living; he admits that the third Gospel, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, were written in their present form by St. Luke, who was St. Paul's intimate companion, and who visited Jerusalem with him; he admits that the discourses of our Lord, at all events, in the first Gospel were recorded by St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles, and that they deserve to be accepted with peculiar confidence; and he further admits that the second

Summary of M. Renan's admissions.

Gospel was in substance written by St. Mark, that it is the most original, in its present form, of the three, that it bears numerous marks of the reminiscences of an eye-witness, and that there is nothing to lead us to doubt the ancient tradition that this eye-witness was St. Peter himself.

In short, this is the result of modern criticism as represented by M. Renan : that in St. Matthew we have our Lord's teaching recorded by an Apostle himself ; in St. Mark we have the vivid reminiscences of another Apostle, who was one of the three most intimate with our Lord ; and that in St. Luke we have the mature and deliberate record of a cultivated writer, who, being a physician, was also trained in habits of observation, after a careful inquiry from contemporaries, amidst the very scenes where the events he records were transacted. We repeat that we do not rest these facts respecting the first three Gospels on M. Renan's investigations. They stand, in the first instance, on the direct evidence of historic tradition, by which the authorship of all other books is determined. But we appeal to M. Renan as affording abundant proof that modern criticism has produced no arguments sufficient to counterbalance, or even seriously to affect, this evidence.

We now turn to the Gospel of St. John ; and vehement as has been the controversy on this subject, the case in favour of its authenticity

Results of
modern
criticism as
represented
by M. Renan

The facts he
admits rest
on the direct
evidence of
historic
tradition,
but his
admissions
show that
modern
criticism
has not
shaken the
evidence.

The evidence
of the
authorship
of the fourth
Gospel.

admits of being more simply and decisively stated than even the case of the first three Gospels. In the first place, the primary evidence to its authorship is peculiarly definite and direct. Irenæus, who became Bishop of Lyons about 177 A.D. was a pupil of a famous disciple of St. John, Polycarp, who died as a martyr in the year 155 or 156. Irenæus tells us, in a letter of remonstrance he wrote to a fellow-pupil, Florinus, who had lapsed into heresy, how vividly he remembered Polycarp's instructions and conversation:

The testi-
mony of
Irenæus.

"I distinctly remember," he says, "the incidents of that time better than events of recent occurrence; for the lessons received in childhood, growing with the growth of the soul, become identified with it; so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures." (*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20.)

By the
Scriptures
he meant
the Gospels.

In order to appreciate what this involves, we must ask what Irenæus meant by the "Scriptures." Of course the expression must refer to those portions of the Scriptures which narrate the life of our Lord, and Irenæus has stated in a memorable passage what these records were. In the third book of his great work on *The Refutation*

*and Overthrow of Knowledge falsely so-called, he relates briefly, says Bishop Lightfoot:*¹

- "the circumstances under which the four Gospels were written. He points out that the writings of the Evangelists arose directly from the oral Gospel of the apostles. He shows that the traditional teaching of the apostles has been preserved by a direct succession of elders, which in the principal churches can be traced man by man, and he asserts that this teaching accords entirely with the evangelical and apostolical writings. He maintains on the other hand, that the doctrine of the heretics was of comparatively recent growth. He assumes throughout, not only that our four Canonical Gospels alone were acknowledged in the Church in his own time, but that this had been so from the beginning. His antagonists indeed accepted these same Gospels, paying especial deference to the Fourth Evangelist; and accordingly he argues with them on this basis. But they also super-added other writings, to which they appealed, while heretics of a different type, as Marcion for instance, adopted some one Gospel to the exclusion of all others. He therefore urges not only that four Gospels alone have been handed down from the beginning, but that in the nature of things there could not be more nor less than four. There are four regions of the world, and four principal winds; and the Church therefore, as destined to be conterminous with the world, must be supported by four Gospels, as four pillars. The Word again is represented as seated on the cherubim, who are described by Ezekiel as four living creatures, each different from the other. These symbolize the four Evangelists, with their several characteristics. The predominance of the number four again appears in another way. There are four general covenants—of Noah, of Abraham, of Moses, of Christ. It is therefore an act of audacious folly to increase or diminish the number of the Gospels. As there is fitness and order in all the other works of God, so also we may expect to find it in the case of the Gospel."

Bishop Lightfoot's summary of the testimony of Irenaeus.

The passage thus summarized by the present learned Bishop of Durham is to be found in the first eleven chapters of the third book of the work

¹ *Contemporary Review* for August, 1876, p. 413.

Irenæus
appeals to
Polycarp.

The four
Gospels
known to
and
recognized
by Polycarp.

Irenæus used
the same
Gospels as
are now in
our pos-
session.

of Irenæus just mentioned, and its immense significance for the purpose of our argument will readily be perceived. The four Gospels we now possess constituted, in the view of Irenæus, an essential part of "the Scriptures." The reasons he gives for the necessity of their being four in number may be fanciful, but they are adduced in order to explain what he represents as a fact. He appeals, however, to Polycarp's authority, and his view therefore respecting the four Gospels must be in harmony with what he had learnt at Polycarp's feet. The conclusion, therefore, cannot fairly be avoided that Polycarp himself, St. John's own disciple, knew and recognized all four Gospels, not only those of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, but that which was attributed to his own master, St. John. When Irenæus tells us that Polycarp used to describe "his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord;" and that "whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord and about His miracles and about His teaching," he would relate "altogether in accordance with the Scriptures," he tells us nothing less than that what Polycarp had heard from John, and from the rest who had seen the Lord, was in complete agreement with our present Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. That Irenæus used precisely the same Gospels as are now in our

possession is disputed by no one; and these very books he says are in full agreement with what he heard from Polycarp, and Polycarp heard from St. John.

These Gospels agree with what he heard from Polycarp and what Polycarp heard from St. John.

Now, this testimony to the first three Gospels is of immense weight, for it gives at all events the sanction of Polycarp, and goes far to give the sanction and recognition of St. John himself, to those three books. But with respect to the Gospel of St. John it would seem overwhelming. The one point upon which Polycarp was specially qualified to bear testimony to Irenæus, and on which he did bear testimony, was the teaching of St. John, and that Apostle's account of our Lord's words and works. If, then, St. John was not the author of the fourth Gospel, is it conceivable that Irenæus should not only have been ignorant of the fact, but that he should have treated that Gospel as part of "the Scriptures," and have declared that it was in entire conformity with what he had heard from his aged master? If the Gospel was by St. John, it must have been written before the year 100, and it must have been in circulation in Asia Minor at the time when Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp. The book must have been in their hands, and Polycarp certainly must have known whether or not it was the work of his own master. We have therefore the declared and solemn evidence of a man whom

Irenæus could not have treated the fourth Gospel as part of the Scriptures if St. John had not written it.

The date of St. John's Gospel.

No doubt of St. John's authorship is expressed in early times by anyone who knew the facts.

we may call the spiritual and literary grandchild of St. John, with the implied evidence of St. John's own child in the faith, to the fact that that Apostle was the author of the fourth Gospel. We have only to add that in early times no doubt respecting St. John's authorship is expressed by any writer who was in any way likely to be acquainted with the facts; and it may be confidently asked whether more direct and positive testimony to the authorship of an ancient work could be obtained or desired?

It would need an enormous preponderance of critical difficulties to justify the rejection of such evidence. We are asked to doubt the very eyes and ears, the very mind and heart, of two of the best witnesses in all Christian antiquity; and what are the objections on the strength of which this demand is made upon us? We take M. Renan once more as a fair exponent of the force which these critical objections possess, and we are content to ask him to what they amount. The result will be scarcely credible to many readers; but they may easily verify for themselves what we say. He practically confesses that every objection is insufficient except one; and what is that? Simply that in M. Renan's opinion the discourses of our Lord recorded by St. John are

M. Renan's one insuperable difficulty is the discourses of our Lord recorded by St. John.

"pretentious tirades, heavy, badly written, making but little appeal to the moral sense." (Introd. to *Vie de Jésus*, p. lxix.)

This extraordinary opinion, which will need no refutation for most English readers, remains M. Renan's sole substantial ground for rejecting St. John's authorship. At the end of a long appendix he concludes that there are only two alternatives :

"Either the author of the fourth Gospel was a disciple of Jesus, an intimate disciple, and from the most early period ; or else the author, for the purpose of giving himself authority, has employed an artifice which he has maintained from the beginning of the book to the end, with the view of making it believed that he was a witness in as good a position as possible for narrating the truth of the facts " (p. 537, 15th edition).

The only alternatives according to M. Renan.

In other words, as M. Renan goes on to admit, the author is either St. John, or he is a liar.

"There is no question here of legends, the creation of the multitude, for which no person in particular is responsible. A man who, to procure credence to what he narrates, deceives the public not only respecting his name, but still more with respect to the value of his testimony, is not a writer of legends, he is a forger " (p. 538).

M. Renan fully admits the difficulty of such an alternative, and confesses as the result of all this discussion that

The difficulty of such an alternative.

"at a first glance it seems that the most natural hypothesis is to admit that all these writings—the Gospel and the three Epistles—are really the work of John, the son of Zebedee."

Why does not he accept this "natural hypothesis"? He mentions, first, one or two objections which are of no real weight, and which have been given up by other rationalistic writers—such as that the Greek in which the fourth Gospel is written is very different

The Greek of the fourth Gospel really an argument in favour of St. John's authorship.

from the Palestinian Greek of the other books of the New Testament. But this, as has been often observed, is a strong argument in favour of St. John's authorship; for if he lived for thirty years, from A.D. 70-100, in so thoroughly Greek a city as Ephesus, he would be likely to acquire a purer Greek style than any of his fellow-apostles. M. Renan falls back, as his main objection, on his dislike to the discourses in the fourth Gospel.

M. Renan's dislike to the discourses his main objection.

"The ideas, above all, are of an order entirely different from those in the other books of the New Testament. We are here in full Philonian, and almost Gnostic metaphysic. The discourses of Jesus as reported by this pretended witness, this intimate disciple, are false, often insipid, and impossible."

The general character of the narrative, according to him, in favour of St. John's authorship.

That is all. As to the general character of the narrative in itself, it is all in favour of St. John's authorship:—

"Considered in itself, the narrative of the material circumstances of the life of our Lord, as furnished by the fourth evangelist, is superior in point of verisimilitude to the narrative of the other three Gospels" (p. 536).

M. Renan notices elsewhere the little traits of precision in the story: "It was the sixth hour;" "it was night;" "the servant's name was Malchus;" "they had made a fire of coals, for it was cold;" "the coat was without seam;" and he speaks of characteristics which are

"inexplicable on the supposition that our Gospel was nothing more than a theological thesis without historical value, but which are intelligible if we see in them the reminiscences of an old man" (p. lxviii).

There is, in a word, a mass of internal as well as external evidence in support of the belief of Irenæus and Polycarp on this subject; but it is all to be thrown aside simply because M. Renan cannot endure the exquisite discourses which the fourth Gospel records!

Such is the weakness of the objections which criticism is able to adduce against the genuineness of the Gospel of St. John, according to the testimony of the most famous sceptic of modern times. The truth is that, as was stated last year by Dr. Bernhard Weiss, one of the most learned scholars of Germany, the disciples of Baur, the founder of the Tübingen school, have been compelled

The weakness of the objections against the genuineness of St. John's Gospel.

"step by step to concede one after another of the testimonies against which he contended. Every new discovery since his time . . . has positively refuted contentions of criticism which had long been obstinately maintained." (*Leben Jesu*, i., 92.)

One of these recent discoveries is perhaps worth mention. Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr, was said by tradition to have prepared a harmony of our four Gospels, called the Diatessaron. Of course if he did, the four Gospels must have been of recognized authority in his own time and in that of his master, a consideration which alone would take us back to the first half of the second century. Accordingly, writers like the author of *Supernatural Religion* were at great pains to maintain that there was no sufficient evidence of

Tatian's Diatessaron.

The author of *Supernatural Religion* denies that Tatian wrote any such work.

Tatian having written any such harmony at all ; and more than this, that

"it is obvious there is no evidence of any value connecting Tatian's Gospel with those in our canon " (vol ii., p. 157, 1879).

Most
sceptical
critics now
admit that
Tatian did
prepare a
harmony of
the four
Gospels
which we
possess.

At the very time these words were published, only four years ago, a work by an eminent Christian father had been recovered, which is regarded by the general assent of German scholars as a commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron ; and hence even sceptical critics now generally admit that Tatian did weave into one harmony the very four Gospels which we now possess. In short, as M. Renan is acute enough to perceive and candid enough to admit, all the external critical objections against the authenticity of our four Gospels have successively broken down more or less fatally ; and there remains no other objection to be made to them than that some critics cannot understand or account for them.

The reason
of the
persistency
of negative
criticism in
face of the
evidence in
favour of
the Gospels.

Some readers may perhaps be disposed to think that the last sentence involves a rather harsh judgment, and it is a statement we should not make unless, as we shall observe in conclusion, it were made by the critics themselves. It would be natural to ask, at the close of such an inquiry as this, how it is that if the critical objections against the Gospels are so baseless, they should have been maintained with such persistency by scholars so learned and so earnest as those who have been the leaders of the negative schools in Germany for the

last fifty years. It is only to be explained on one supposition, and that is that they started with a prejudice against the truth of the Gospel narratives, and they were concerned at almost any cost to justify their disbelief. Again we say that this is a charge we should not have ventured to advance except on their own confession and avowal; but as the avowal has been made by them, again and again, it is equally necessary and just that they should be held to the consequences of it.

The avowals
of sceptics.

It will be sufficient on this point to quote the testimony of Dr. Karl Hase, one of the most venerable scholars of Germany, whose *Life of Jesus*, published more than fifty years ago, was the first work of the kind, who represents on the whole a decidedly rationalistic view, and who has lately reviewed the whole course of the controversy in his *History of Jesus*, published in 1876. He there (p. 124) says that the novelty of the mode of treatment adopted by himself, and by Strauss and his successors was that the chief writers of this school laboured in all earnestness, and with all the resources of science, "to represent a purely human life, founded on purely human writings." That is, they started from the supposition that our Lord's life was purely human, and therefore could have had nothing miraculous about it. Their avowed object therefore was, by some means or other, to explain away the miraculous narratives

Their mode
of treatment
according to
Dr. Karl
Hase.

Everything supernatural must be explained away.

Strauss' theory.

Baur's theory.

contained in the Gospels. Strauss expressed this prejudice in the plainest language by saying that "that which could not have happened did not happen;" and consequently the problem for the critic was to explain how four writers like the authors of our Gospels came to say with such circumstantiality that things which could not have happened did happen. His explanation was that the stories of the Gospels grew up as myths, embodying certain religious and political ideas which were then afloat. That explanation was given up as inadequate, even by his immediate successor, Baur. But Baur started from the same prejudice, and set himself a similar task. The theory which he and his followers maintained was that the Gospels were very late productions, which had been written with the specific "tendency" or purpose of maintaining special views—Petrine, Pauline, or Jchannine—of the principles of Christianity. They invented ingenious combinations for this purpose; but as Dr. Hase, who admires them, though he differs from them, observes

"the uncertainty of a negative result was exhibited in this case also; and for Baur also the decisive reason is the marvellous and impossible character of the contents of the Gospels" (p. 143).

So Baur himself said (*Canon. Gospels*, p. 530) that

Baur's main argument for the later origin of our Gospels.

"the capital argument for the later origin of our Gospels remains always this—that each of them for itself, and still more all of them together, represent so much in the life of Jesus in a manner in which in reality it never could have happened."

Thus, says Dr. Hase,

"The criticism of the Gospels comes back to the criticism of the Gospel history; . . . and the question arises, whether the Gospels do really relate what is so impossible?"

Dr. Hase thinks that the sacred narratives can after all be explained away into something natural and ordinary, only magnified by excited imaginations; and something of the same kind is M. Renan's view, although the explanations of these two writers differ very widely. But M. Renan also bases the whole of his argument on the supposition that miracles are impossible.

Dr. Hase's
view.

"If," he says, in the Preface to his thirteenth edition, (p. ix.,) "miracles and the inspiration of certain books are realities, my method is detestable. If miracles and the inspiration of books are beliefs without reality, my method is a good one. But the question of the supernatural is decided for us with perfect certainty, by the single consideration that there is no room for believing in a thing of which the world offers no experimental trace."

Renan on the
impossibility
of miracles.

Accordingly M. Renan, in his turn, must find some means of explaining away the Gospels. But, as we have seen, he is compelled to admit that all attempts to trace their authorship to a later age than that of the apostles, or, in the main, to other hands than those of their traditional authors, has failed; and so he endeavours to explain them as a kind of romance.

His explana-
tion of the
Gospels.

In view of these facts it will now be seen that the difficulties connected with the history of the four Gospels have never, at any time, been

Objections to the Gospels have never been based on candid and unprejudiced criticism.

The good faith of the evangelists.

Criticism has been unable to establish any serious objection against the authenticity of the Gospels.

based upon candid and unprejudiced criticism. They have been raised in the interest of a criticism which started with foregone conclusions, and their authors have been driven back from post to post, and have had to take refuge in one arbitrary theory after another. The "natural hypothesis" has always been what M. Renan declares it is now in respect to the fourth Gospel,—namely, that St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John were the real authors of the four books which bear their names, and that they are faithful witnesses to what actually occurred. It is remarkable that if we put out of sight the hypothesis of Baur, now confessedly exploded, that the four Gospels were of late origin, and written with a controversial purpose, no serious critic impugns the good faith of the writers. The only possible objection which remains is that all four writers were utterly deluded as to what they "saw and heard and handled." Other tracts of this series have dealt and will deal with that extravagant supposition. Our concern has simply been to show that we possess in the four Gospels contemporary records by competent witnesses, and that criticism has been unable to establish any serious objection against this belief.

THE AUTHORSHIP
OF THE
FOURTH GOSPEL.

BY

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ST. LUKE AND ST. JOHN, AND THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS," ETC.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56 PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,
LONDON.

Argument of the Tract.

THE concurrent testimony of Christian antiquity, of the sects, the Church and early Fathers, and of the Gospel itself, points to the Johannine authorship. The contents and characteristics of the Book are examined, a comparison between the Gospel and the First Epistle of St. John is instituted, and the conclusion is arrived at that the author of the Gospel must have been a Jew, a Palestinian Christian, a contemporary of Jesus, a member of the intimate circle of His friends, one of His Apostles, the disciple whom Jesus loved, even John, the son of Zebedee.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.¹



I

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.



HERE is a small memoir composed eighteen centuries ago, which, if published separately, would scarcely form a brochure of forty or fifty pages. This little work has been, especially in the last century, the subject of critical study and exegetical commentaries so numerous that they would fill a library.² The memoir.

Nevertheless, it does not present any particular obscurities. It is a simple recital, written in a clear flowing style, its simplicity sometimes borders on *naïveté*, and if its contents are deep, they resemble the ocean in this respect, which is transparent even to the bottom in fine weather. This book has been rightly compared to the light of the moon, whose brilliant splendour meets our gaze through the mysterious calm of the night Its style.

¹ Written for the Series in French. Translated by Mrs. Kelly.

² See the rough list prepared by M. René Gregory, Clark, Edinburgh, 1875.

The story.

What is it, then—if there be no difficulty of style, nor anything abstract in the character of the subject—which can stimulate, even to this day, the ardour of the critic and the sagacity of interpreters? It is that the story contained in this book is that of a fact which dominates over the whole history; and on the conception we form of the book depends largely our estimate of the fact itself.

What is Christianity?

Is Christianity simply, as has been said, "one of the days of humanity," which has succeeded so many others, and which will in its turn be replaced by others, a halting-place in the indefinite progress of our race? Or is it rather, the last word of the revelations of the eternal God to mankind, the sheet-anchor offered to fallen man by Infinite Love?

The question one of life or death.

That is the question that arises in connexion with this little book, and is the real subject of discussion. We have not here a literary problem that we require to solve, an interesting scientific subject to explain; but a question of life or death which is presented to the world and to every individual in it. If the contents of this book are historically true, we can only bow the knee before Him whose history it contains, and say to Him as Thomas is recorded to have done at the close of it, "My Lord and my God." If it is only a religious romance, although the most sublime that has ever

been penned, it is not necessary to occupy ourselves with it at this time of day, and the men of the nineteenth century have only to say: We shall look for another. (Matt. xi. 3.)

II.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY TO THE JOHANNINE AUTHORSHIP.

CHRISTIAN antiquity has been unanimous in transmitting this book to the Church as the work of a man who was the disciple—nay, more than the disciple—the personal friend of Jesus, John the son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret. The Church, as well as the sects most opposed to it, are agreed upon this point.

The testimony of antiquity

In the second century the Judeo-Christian party, the most hostile to the apostolic spirit, used this narrative as taken from a book whose statements could not be called in question.¹ At the opposite extreme, Marcion, who made special claims to spiritual enlightenment, acknowledges in a letter that he, in common with all the Church, had made use of it up till the moment when he had found in the Epistle to the Galatians a passage which had

The Sects.

¹ The Clementine Homilies. These writings contain four quotations from John perfectly distinct. See Charteris, *Canoncity*, pp. 184, 185.

made him reject the authority (not the authenticity) of this Gospel.¹ We observe the same common acknowledgment in the case of two other parties, equally opposed to each other. The Montanists, a sect of enthusiasts, professing to derive everything in the life of the Church from the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, made the promise of the Paraclete in St. John xiv.-xvi. the basis of all their work; and the philosophers, called Gnostics, constructed likewise their theory of the history of the universe from materials borrowed from this Gospel, especially from its prologue.

The Church. Whilst these parties, who separated from the main body of the Church presided over by bishops, all made use of this book as their fulcrum, in spite of their mutual opposition, the Church, which contended with them to the bitter end, and defended itself against their multiplied attacks, never doubted the apostolic origin of this Gospel, which they used against her in quite an opposite sense.

**Justin
Martyr.**

Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, quotes it frequently, as without doubt forming part of the collection of "Apostolic Memoirs," which are read, said he, every Lord's day in all the churches of Christendom, and which he made the basis of his teaching in Rome.²

¹ Tertullian *contra* Marcion.

² See *Charteris*, pp. 176-178.

A little later, an African writer, giving an account of the writings which the churches in his country publicly read as apostolic, designates the Gospel of John as the fourth, and added himself in the words:

The
Muratorian
fragment.

“that which we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you;”—

John declares himself to be not only an eye-witness, but a hearer, and still more a narrator of all the wonderful things concerning the Lord.¹

Irenæus, about the year 180, after having related the origin of the three first Gospels, adds,

Irenæus.

“Then John, the disciple, who rested on the Lord’s bosom, also published his Gospel whilst he remained at Ephesus in Asia.”²

It is remarkable that Irenæus, who wrote at Lyons, in Gaul, came from Asia Minor, where he had spent his young days at Smyrna, under the teaching of Polycarp, who had lived with John himself, and who ought to have thoroughly known all that concerned the book attributed to this apostle.³ What authority and value does such a witness possess!

¹ A fragment, called after Muratori.

² See for numerous other testimonies of this father, *Charteris*, pp. 66-72.

³ See the letter to his friend Florinus, in which he reminds him in such a striking manner of the hours they had passed together at the feet of the venerable bishop, installed by John himself.—Eusebius, *Church History*, x. 23.

New
Testament
writers first
designated
by name in
the end of
the second
century.

The writers of the first half of the second century quote the sacred writings without naming the authors. It was not till later, at the end of the century, when Christian learning began, that they designated the writers of the New Testament by their names. Thus Irenæus is the first who quotes the Epistle to the Romans, naming the author, saying, "Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote to the Romans." The same fact occurs again with respect to the fourth Gospel. Although this Gospel is quoted throughout the whole century as of apostolic authority, it is Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, about the year 180, who was the first (after the African author quoted above) to speak of the fourth Gospel as the work of John :—

"It is what the Holy Scriptures, and all inspired men teach us, among whom John says, 'In the beginning was the Word.'"

The apostolic origin of this Gospel was a fact of public notoriety, to which it was not generally necessary to bear especial testimony.

Relation
between the
testimony of
the Church
and that of
the sects.

When we reflect on the relation of the Church to the sects, we ask how, if the fourth Gospel was the product of one of these sects, it could have been universally received by the Church, or how, if it had been composed at a later period in the history of the Church, it could have been so generally received by the sects? There is but one reply to this question, and it is instructive.

This double fact can only be explained on the supposition of the Gospel having been composed and used in the Church before these divers heretical sects sprang up; so that they, while going their separate ways, all carried away the book with them as the patrimony of the family, which they were not willing to give up. This action on their part pre-supposes, not only the high antiquity of this Gospel,—since the separation of these sects took place towards the end of the first century (compare 1 John ii. 19),—but that its existence and authority were recognised before this separation. Now this authority, which the evil use that these sects made of this writing did not shake, could only rest on the conviction of its apostolic origin.

Explanation
of the fact.

This conviction of the Church is declared in a document almost as old as the Gospel itself, the supplementary statement in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John. The Gospel, properly so called, ends with the twentieth chapter, for the verses thirty and thirty-one of that chapter plainly indicate the close of the book. The twenty-first chapter has then been added subsequently, evidently from the oral narrative of the author of the whole book, for in that chapter the method of narration and style are the same as in the rest of the book. The aim of this appendix has been to preserve the three prophecies of the risen Jesus as to the future of His disciples.

The twenty-
first chapter.

The aim of
it.

The predictions of the twenty-first chapter.

The first, about his disciples in general, to whom Jesus predicted, through the miraculous draught of fishes, the most magnificent missionary success; the second, with respect to Peter, to whom He entrusted the direction of the Church, and promised him martyrdom as a compensation for his denial; the third, with regard to John, about whom Jesus said to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" These last words, which promised at any rate to John a longer life than that of the other apostles, and extending beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, got spread abroad in the Church in an altered form. It was pretended that the Lord had promised John that he should not die till His final return, or in other words, that he should not die at all. In order to rectify this error, the author took care to state clearly the exact meaning of the words of Jesus. When was this appendix drawn up? It must have been at the time when the death of John and the apparent contradiction of this fact with the promise of Jesus occupied the mind of the Church, consequently, immediately after his death, or more probably still, at the time when it was seen approaching. The friends of John wished, by preserving the very words of Jesus, to prevent the contradiction which this event would give to His words, under the form in which they were usually quoted. They drew up, with this idea,

The date of the chapter.

this appendix, and ended it with this remarkable declaration,—

“This is the disciple (the disciple whom Jesus loved, v. 20, 23) which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.”

These men who knew the author personally, who knew from the relations that they had long had with him, that he was incapable of bearing false witness, declare in the face of the world by publishing this chapter, that its author is none other than the disciple whom Jesus loved, and they know him to be incapable of lying; and they act in this manner while that author is still alive, for that comes out in the different tenses of the two verbs used, “He who *bears* witness of these things,” and “He who *has written* them.” His book is composed, finished, but his oral testimony still lasts. We may add that this twenty-first chapter is not lacking in any document, nor manuscript, nor ancient version of the Gospel. The Gospel has never existed without it, this appendix has always been published with it. It is difficult to imagine a more ancient testimony, nor one more worthy of respect.

There is one, however, that outdoes it in antiquity and dignity. In many passages in this book the author designates and points to himself. In chap. i. 14 he speaks of himself as an ocular witness of what he is about to say:—

The
testimony of
the
publishers.

Testimony
of the
author
himself.

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth."

The moral
sense
impossible
here.

It has been maintained that every Christian can, in a certain sense,¹ affirm the same thing. Yes, in a certain sense; but this purely moral sense is impossible here, for the Evangelist speaks evidently of the Incarnation, and the earthly life of Jesus, whose history he is about to relate. In such a context it is impossible to use the term *beheld* in a purely spiritual sense. In chapter xix. 35, when the side of Jesus was pierced by the spear, and blood and water flowed from the wound, the Evangelist says:—

"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

Writers have used and abused the term "*he that*" to maintain that the author was here distinguishing himself from the witness who had seen the fact, and had told him of it. But how could he say of any other man than himself, "He knows that he *saith* true"? One man does not answer for another's conscience; in the nature of things a man can only answer for himself. The Greek pronoun translated "*he that*" proves nothing to the contrary, but is frequently employed in this Gospel in an exclusive sense, "He, and he alone" (comp. i. 18; v. 39; ix. 37); and in no case to point out a different person. It is the witness of the fact

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 16.

who is narrating it, it is *he alone* who has seen it, and all others who know the fact only know it by *faith* in his testimony.

"He who hath seen, has borne witness of it, that ye may believe."

The testimony of the author himself in the capacity of eye-witness is unanswerably confirmed by the passage in his first Epistle (1 John i. 1-4), which so much struck the author of the Muratorian fragment quoted above:—

Confirmation of the testimony in the first Epistle.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life . . . declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son' Jesus Christ."

It is not possible to express in more forcible terms the fact of personal perception than by means of the different bodily senses,—sight, hearing, touch. Some have supposed that the author wished simply to controvert the heretics who pretended that the body of Jesus was only an appearance; but the affirmation of John would have been of no value to such persons, for these people acknowledged that there had been sensible appearances in the life of Jesus, only they maintain that they were without material reality; and any affirmation of witnesses would not demonstrate to them the contrary. Besides, the first words, "He that was from the beginning," would have been worse than

The affirmation of the fact of the Incarnation.

useless in this sense. That which John affirmed in this introduction of his Epistle was not the reality of the body of Jesus, it was the solemn and fundamental fact of the Incarnation, the dwelling of the Eternal Word in the humanity of Jesus. Life has been manifested, and we have seen it. And again, he who has seen, heard, touched, bears witness, in order that those who have not seen, heard, touched, may believe, and thus possess and rejoice with Him (vers. 3, 4). There is too much holy majesty and tender love in these words to suppose that they were those of an impostor; and if he who wrote them was what he pretended to be, the witness of the life and death of Jesus, it must be admitted that this witness was an Apostle, and that this Apostle was the disciple whom Jesus loved, as has been attested in the twenty-first chapter. For he alone was at the foot of the cross (John xix. 26), and was able to see with his eyes the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus.

The extent of their testimony to the authorship of the fourth Gospel.

Such are the witnesses who attest the Johannine origin of the fourth Gospel. We do not think that any other ancient book has similar witnesses. They go back to Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the friend of John, through the whole of the second century, to the editors of the writing of which they were the depositories, even to John himself.

The only religious party in the second century,

who appear to have rejected this Gospel, as well as the other writings of John, was a little sect in Asia Minor, of whom Irenæus and Epiphanius speak, and whom the latter called *Aloges*, a name which probably contains a play upon words, this term signifying at the same time, "who denies the Word," and "destitute of reason." These sectaries were compelled to reject the writings of John through their antipathy to the Montanists, who found in these writings a support for their exaltation. But they became, without intending it, witnesses to the general tradition of the Church, by attributing them to the heretic Cerinthus, who had been the adversary of the Apostle John at Ephesus. To make this man the author of these writings was in effect admitting that they had been published in the place, and at the same time as the tradition of the Church placed the composition of this Gospel.

The only
opponents.

III.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

WE will now turn to the book itself as if we had hitherto been strangers to the Christian Church, and as if this book had fallen for the first time into our hands.

In the preamble (vers. 1-18) the author, with great solemnity, impresses on us the gravity and decisive value of the history he is going to narrate

The
prologue
(i. 1-18).

The
substance
of the
prologue.

to us. There is in God an eternal Being like Him, who lives with Him in the most intimate communion, who even shares His divinity, and is the expression of His Essence, as the word is the expression of the thought—different from it, and yet one with it. This Being has been the agent of the creation, He is the principle of Life, and of all that lives, the Light of all who see clearly, and He has Himself appeared in the world to enlighten it. But although every precaution was taken that He might be known at His coming, although He was preceded by a messenger appointed to prepare His way, and although a dwelling was beforehand prepared in the world for Him, this was closed against Him, and "His own received Him not." Nevertheless the blessing of His coming has not been lost. A band of men were found who recognized in this Being the characteristic signs of the glory of the Most High, of His grace and truth, and who understood that this was none other than "the Word made flesh." They received Him, and found in Him the plenitude of grace and truth, and the true knowledge of God. By the new birth received in His name, they became the children of God.

This is the substance of this incomparable preamble, which, like the overture in an oratorio, presents all the essential features of the work that is to follow. The three aspects of the history of

Christ, as it is presented to us in this Gospel, answer in fact to the three great thoughts of the prologue: 1st, Jesus manifesting Himself to the world as the Eternal Word; 2nd, a part of mankind shutting their eyes to the light and rejecting it; 3rd, a church of believers, rallying to His call and endued with grace by Him; in three words: Jesus—unbelief—faith. Upon these three thoughts rests, as we shall see, the plan of the whole narrative.

Its correspondence with the aspects of the history.

In the first part (ch. i.-iv.) the first of these three thoughts prevails: Jesus and His revelation as the Son of God. This revelation is made through the testimony of John the Baptist, and by the manifestations of Jesus Himself, in word and deed. We leave to the reader the task of studying the narrative, and applying to it this general idea. We will only add that the fact of this revelation of Jesus does not exclusively occupy this first part; but the two others, faith and unbelief, have also a place in it, although a subsidiary one: the first, in the person of the five disciples whose calling is mentioned in chap. i.; then in that of Nicodemus (chap. iii.), and of the Samaritans (iv.), and even in the narrative of the nobleman's son (chap. iv.), although his faith, as well as that of Nicodemus, was tarnished by religious materialism, by the dependence it placed on miracles; and on the other hand, unbelief

Jesus as Son of God the thought of the first part (i. 19-iv. 54).

Faith and unbelief have a subsidiary place.

begins to manifest itself in the hostile deputation from the Sanhedrim (chap. i.), in the conduct of the authorities at the temple (chap. ii.), in the attitude of the population at Jerusalem, and of the disciples of John the Baptist (chap. iii.), in short, in that of the Galilean people as it is characterized by the words of Jesus,

“If ye see not signs and miracles, ye will not believe.”

Unbelief
the thought
of the
second part
(v.-xii.).

In the second part (chap. v.-xii.) it is unbelief that prevails. No doubt Jesus continues to manifest Himself, for this fundamental feature remains the root and principle of all the progress of the history, and side by side with unbelief, faith is increasing in His disciples and among others also, such as Nicodemus (chap. vii. 50), the man born blind (ix.), the inhabitants of Bethany (xi.), and a certain number in Jerusalem (vii. 40; x. 42; xii. 11 and 20). But the most striking characteristic of this part of the narrative is the progress of Israelitish unbelief. Its development is manifested on the occasion of the three miracles performed in Judea, viz., the healing of the impotent man (chap. v.), the man born blind (chap. ix.), and the resurrection of Lazarus (chap. xi.), then in a miracle no less striking that took place in Galilee, the multiplication of the loaves of bread (chap. vi.). In the fifth chapter, the design is formed at Jerusalem of putting Jesus to death as a Sabbath-

The progress
of
Israelitish
unbelief.

breaker and a blasphemer (v. 16 and 18). In the sixth chapter, the Galilean faith, which had apparently been so vigorous, withers when Jesus speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in order to be saved (vi. 60-66). In the seventh chapter things come to such a height during the sojourn of Jesus at Jerusalem, that the Sanhedrim takes the first proceedings against Him, and gives its officers orders to seize Him (ver. 32). In the eighth chapter Jesus is obliged to deny to the people of Jerusalem the title of children of Abraham, and to substitute that of the children of the devil (ver. 39-41). The first attempt to stone Him is made (ver. 59). In the ninth chapter we find that every follower of Jesus had been excommunicated from the synagogue (ver. 22), and we see the hatred and jealousy of the heads of the people burst forth. In the tenth chapter a still more serious attempt is made to stone Him, which Jesus checks with these words:

The
withering of
Galilean
faith.

Christ's
followers
excommunicated.

"Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone Me?" (vers. 31, 32)

In chapter eleven, the third good work, the raising of Lazarus, causes the hatred of the Sanhedrim to blaze forth upon Him, and leads to the decision being formed of putting Jesus to death as soon as possible (ver. 53). The first step is taken for carrying out this project. He is publicly denounced as one worthy of death. The twelfth

The raising
of Lazarus
and the
hatred of
the
Sanhedrim

chapter completes the development of unbelief. He who is to play the part of the traitor reveals himself when Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (ch. xii. 4, 5). Then at the close of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the chief priests understand that there is no more room for delay; Jesus, on His part, leaves the temple, saying to the people :

“ Yet a little while the light is with you ” (v. 19-35).

Here the narrator comes to a pause :

“ He departed, and did hide Himself from them ; ”

Retrospec-
tive view
of the
culmination
of unbelief.

that is to say, He did not reappear in the temple. The narrative at this point of tragical importance is followed by a retrospective *coup d'œil* upon the fact of the national unbelief now fully matured. Such a result is so astonishing that it must be looked at as a divine dispensation. A judicial hardening fell upon Israel, that is why, in spite of such miracles and striking testimonies, (which the author resumes in ver. 44-50), Israel held out and remained in unbelief to the end. This conclusion leaves no doubt as to the thought that predominates in this second part, viz., the development of the national unbelief, hastened on by each great act of the public ministry of Jesus.

Third part
(xiii.-xvii.)
The
development
of faith.

The third part (ch. xiii.-xvii.) is devoted to the delineation of the third fact—the development of faith. In the intimate circle of those who were

depositories of the faith, Jesus more fully manifests Himself, first, by an act fitted to dispel all carnal Messianic hopes, the washing of the disciples' feet; then by a series of instructions which arise from questions put to Him by four of His disciples; and lastly, in His leave-taking of them. He shows them what will be their mission in the world, to renew it by His life working in them, He foretells to them the enmity they would encounter, but also promises them the help of His Spirit, which will make them courageous witnesses for Him. This part also ends with an incident which clearly marks the close. The disciples, as if dazzled by the light that had been shown them, exclaim—

Fuller self-
manifesta-
tion of
Jesus.

"Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things . . . We believe that Thou camest forth from God."

Jesus then gives thanks for their faith, although He knows the weakness of it, and in a final prayer commends His person, His disciples, His work to the Father, whose will He has accomplished in this world. This prayer (ch. xvii.), which has been called the priestly prayer, is the act by which the great High Priest of humanity presents to God as His offering, the fruit of His travail, the faith kindled in the hearts of the eleven as an earnest of the future faith of mankind. The traitor among the apostles had, in the course of the evening, left the room in which the passover-

His great
High-
priestly
prayer.

supper was eaten. He shows in this part the subsidiary element of unbelief, as the disciples in the previous part had represented that of faith.

Fourth part
(xviii., xix.)

The consummation
of unbelief.

In the fourth part (ch. xviii. and xix.), which contains the account of the Passion, is described the *consummation of unbelief*, always roused into activity by the holy manifestations of Jesus, and leaving room also for the element of faith. The arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane, where unbelief and hardness of heart culminate in the kiss of the traitor Judas; the appearance of Jesus before Annas, with the denial of Peter; His being brought before Pilate, where His accusers display the most consummate guile, and where Jesus made His judge tremble; the scene of the Crucifixion, during which those tender words were addressed to the disciple whom Jesus loved: "Behold thy mother," and then, "Behold thy Son"; then the breaking of the legs of the malefactors, while those of Jesus were untouched; then the mysterious signs, the piercing of the spear, and the flow of blood and water; then the burial, at which the first gleam of the divine triumph lightens this sorrowful scene: all these things show us the outward victory of unbelief, the result of the events recorded in the second part.

Fifth part
(xx. 1-29).

The fifth part (ch. xx.) is connected exactly in the same way with the third; it is the consummation of the disciples' faith through the

resurrection of Christ, first in the cases of Peter and John, to whom the appearance of the sepulchre presenting no trace of a violent removal became a revelation, then of Mary Magdalene, and in the evening of the day, of all the disciples, to whom Jesus granted a foretaste, as it were, of the day of Pentecost; and lastly, the supreme victory of faith in Thomas, the most refractory of the eleven, who, the moment his unbelief was conquered, attains at a bound to the perception of the full height of the object of faith, in this exclamation, "My Lord and my God." This cry of adoration is the close of the narrative, it is in evident keeping with the first words of the book:

The consummation of faith.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God."

What perfect consistency and unity run through the whole narrative! It is truly a great whole. We feel that we possess the result of the most intense contemplation and of the deepest meditation. One sentence is added after this exclamation of Thomas. It gives us a glance at the future development of the Church that shall be born from the apostolic testimony:

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Corresponding to the prologue is a short conclusion (xx. 30, 31). The author in it explains the method and object of his narrative. He did not intend to relate all he knew of the history of Jesus,

Conclusion
(xx. 30, 31)

The object
of the writer
of the
Gospel.

for He had performed a number of other miracles in the presence of His disciples, "which are not written in this book." This expression, especially in Greek, leads us to suppose that these things are contained in other books, otherwise how could the author of this one pass them over in silence; and why did he explain himself by saying in *this* book? Concerning his object, he has selected from the whole of the facts those which he deemed most appropriate to produce in his readers the same faith which he had derived from witnessing the events, that is, that Jesus is the Messiah promised to the Jews, and the Son of God given to the world. It is in this faith that he had found eternal life, and he desired that his readers might find it also. (On the appendix, chap. xxi., see above.)

IV.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NARRATIVE.

Three
contrasts.

THE greatness of a man is shown by the contrasts that appear in his character; it is the same thing with books, and judged only from this point of view, the fourth Gospel ought to appear to us as a most remarkable work. It presents, indeed, three remarkable contrasts.

First
contrast.
The completeness
of the
framework.

The first contrast relates to the plan of the narrative. On the one hand, the framework of it is much more *complete* than that of the three other

Gospels; and on the other, the narrative has an extraordinarily fragmentary character. To read the three Synoptic¹ Gospels superficially, one would think that the public ministry of Jesus lasted no longer than one year. For no journey to the feasts at Jerusalem is mentioned between the baptism of Jesus and the Easter when He was crucified. We see, on the contrary, from St. John's account, that the public life of Jesus must have lasted at least two years and a half, for between the baptism and the first passover feast, mentioned in ch. ii. 13, a certain time elapsed which may be calculated at some months. In the sixth chapter a second passover is mentioned, and again at the thirteenth chapter, the third and last. This makes the time about two years and a half; and, in fact, such a time was not too long for the earthly work of Jesus. It was but a very short time in which to accomplish the spiritual training of His apostles, and to prepare them for founding the kingdom of God. And the progress of hatred which culminated in the final catastrophe could only have taken place in a period such as that. In studying more closely the Synoptical Gospels themselves, we find a confirmation of this result. The incident related in the sixth chapter (first and following verses) of

The
frag-
mentariness
of the
narrative.

¹ The three Gospels are thus designated in one word—synoptic—because of the almost parallel order of the three accounts.

St. Luke, and in the parallel passages of St. Matthew and St. Mark, supposes a spring time, and consequently a passover feast passed by Jesus in Galilee, long before the passover at which He was put to death. This spring ought, according to all the surroundings of the situation, to correspond with the sixth of St. John, and the events which preceded in the Synoptics suppose one year of Messianic activity.

What the narrative assumes.

And nevertheless how broken and *fragmentary* is the narrative of John. It assumes a multitude of facts to be known, which have not been related. For instance, the ministry of John the Baptist, and the baptism of Jesus (chap. i. 19), the two personages, Andrew and Peter (ver. 41, and foll.), the mother of Jesus (chap. ii. 1), His first home at Nazareth (chap. ii. 12), the election of the twelve apostles (chap. vi. 70), are spoken of absolutely as if the reader were acquainted with all the details. Much more, the narrative though continuous in a certain respect, contains several surprising gaps. The second return of Jesus to Galilee (chap. iv.) must have happened in the month of December (v. 35); the fifth chapter brings us, according to all probability, to the feast of Purim, in the month of March of the following year: between these two facts, there are three months which the author passes over in complete silence. Between chapters five and six,

Gaps in the narrative.

a month (month of April), of which he says not one word. Between chap. vi. (Easter) and vii. (Feast of Tabernacles, end of September), seven months, of which we only know what we are told in the first verse of the seventh chapter

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him."

Between this feast and that of the dedication (chap. x. 22), which took place at the end of December, again three months without any record of events, and from this time till the following passover, only one single event—the raising of Lazarus—is related in detail. There are seventeen months in all out of two years and a half, of which we only know some isolated days; and if we add the nine months which must have elapsed between His sojourn at Jerusalem at the first passover (chap. ii. 13) and the return to Galilee (chap. iv. 1), that makes no less than twenty-six months out of thirty of which the narrative gives us no account.

Gives no account of twenty-six months out of thirty.

This is indeed a strange method of relating a history! This mode of narration is followed in a number of particular cases. Whilst omitting almost entirely the accounts of the Galilean ministry, the author relates in detail five sojourns at Jerusalem (ii. 5; v. 1; vii.-x. 21; x. 22, and foll.; xii.-xix.). Whilst relating the first calling of the disciples in Judea (chap. i.), he omits the

second at the Lake of Gennesaret. Whilst describing the washing of the disciples' feet (chap. xiii.) at the last supper, he omits the institution of the Lord's Supper. He relates the examination before Annas (xviii. 13), but does not say a word about the solemn appearance before Caiaphas, when Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim (although he does not forget to mention the place where it was held), compare xviii. 24, and the word *first*, v. 13.

The method
pre-supposes
other
narratives.

Such a method of relating a history can only be explained by the author having before him other narratives which were circulating in the Church, in which all the facts omitted by him were mentioned. This is, no doubt, the meaning of the words, "in *this* book" (chap. xx. 30), as we have already indicated.

Second
contrast:
The style.

A second striking contrast is to be remarked in the *style* of this book. The Greek is pure, and free from all Hebraisms. And nevertheless one feels that the thoughts of the author are entirely Jewish. All is intuitive, as among the Semitic race; nothing dialectic, as among the Greeks. The variety of Greek particles is wanting, one only meets with *and* and *then*. The parallelisms, which characterise the Hebrew poetry, appear as soon as the sentiment rises. "No language," says Ewald, "can, as to the spirit and inspiration of it, be more Hebrew than that of our author."

In this style, which has not its equal in any sacred or profane literature, the clothing is Greek, but the body is Hebrew.

A third contrast, more important still, is felt in the *spirit* of the book. On the one hand, the author shows that he is quite freed from all legal forms.

Third
contrast:
The spirit.

"The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father . . . but the true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth." (Chap. iv. 21-24.)

The privileges of the Jew are abolished, and from all people shall be gathered sheep, who shall be one fold, under one Shepherd (x. 16). No more works of the law; the only work God demands is faith (vi. 28, 29). All salvation consists in dwelling in Christ, eating His flesh, and drinking His blood spiritually (vi. 56-63). And on the other hand, what a living relation to the old covenant! Israel, the dwelling-place of Jesus, prepared long before His coming (i. 11). The temple of Jerusalem is the house of His Father, into which He enters and acts as His Son (ii. 16). To believe in Moses is to believe in Him, and to reject Him is to reject Moses (v. 46, 47). Salvation is of the Jews (iv. 22). Jesus Himself is the Messiah promised to them, the true brazen serpent, the true manna, the true Rock whence springs the living water, the true Cloud in the wilderness, the Joy of

Abraham, the Shepherd of Israel, the King promised who should come in the name of the Lord, the Adonai whom Isaiah beheld, the true Paschal Lamb, Jehovah pierced by His people.¹ All the living roots in the thoughts of the author are planted in the soil of the Old Testament. Here is a heart and a mind formed in the school of Him, who, by His coming, had at the same time fulfilled and abolished the old covenant. John at once lives in the old economy, and soars above it, as Jesus had done.

V.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK.

Objections
against the
Apostle's
authorship.
First ob-
jection: the
philo-
sophical
character.

WE now ask who is the *man* who could have written such a book, in which are united and resolved into perfect harmony the most striking spiritual contrasts which it is possible to conceive? Let us forget for a moment the unanimous tradition of the Church, and open the book itself. At the first word the critic meets us and says: "It is not possible that an Apostle of Jesus should have called his Master 'The Word,' for you have here a speculative idea and a philosophical expression which do not harmonize with the spirit and language of a Galilean fisherman; such a man would simply have related his history, with-

¹ John i. 46; iii. 14; vi. 32; vii. 37; viii. 12, 56; x. 1, etc.; xii. 13, 41; xix. 36, 37.

out heading his narrative with a metaphysical idea." But the most simple historian is entitled to put at the beginning of his narrative an idea, if he believes that that idea is realized in the fact that he is about to narrate, and that that idea expresses the essence of it. Now, we cannot doubt that in the mind of the author of this Gospel, the incarnation of the Divine Word is a fact as truly historical and real as all the particular events he is about to relate. When Matthew and Mark commence their narratives by inscribing at the beginning, the one the title of *Messiah*, the other, that of *the Son of God*, they write neither more nor less history than St. John does, when he calls Jesus the Word.

But again, from what source has a disciple of Jesus derived this notion and this term? The Jew Philo made use of it at that time to designate the Mediator between an infinite God and a finite world, who was to prevent the defilement of the Supreme Being by the contact with the material world. Can it be supposed that John, the Apostle, became a disciple of the Jewish philosopher at Alexandria? Assuredly not, we reply; and this is not necessary to explain why he uses the term "the Word" as applied to his Master. It was enough for him, 1st, to have listened to the teaching of Jesus, 2nd, to have read and studied the Old Testament, and 3rd, to know the manner

Philo's use
of the term
"The
Word."

Why the
Apostle used
it.

in which this book was explained even in his time in Palestine.

1. *The teaching of Jesus.*—He had heard his Master say:—

What the
author had
heard his
Master say
of Himself,

“What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?” (vi. 62.)

And these words had revealed Jesus to him as a Being who had existed before His birth into this world. On another occasion he had heard the most startling words from His lips:—

“Before Abraham was, I AM” (viii. 58);

and from this contrast between the *came to be* of Abraham, and the *I am* of Jesus, he must have concluded the eternal existence of the latter. He had heard Jesus praying and saying:—

“Glorify Me, O Father, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (xvii. 5);

and a moment after he had heard Jesus add these words:—

“That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: or Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (xvii. 24);

How the
author
understood
the words of
Jesus.

and he had understood them to mean that this existence of Jesus was not only anterior to His birth into this world or to the life of Abraham, but to the origin of the world and time, that it was not only eternal but glorious; nay more, it was the existence of a Being who was the object of the

love of the Father, and who enjoyed Divine communion with Him.

After such testimony, confirmed by daily contact with Jesus, we can understand how he recognized Him to be a Divine Being, and that he needed to find a term that would express the Divine side of His nature.

2. *The teaching of the Old Testament.*—Genesis and Exodus frequently speak of a Person, distinct from God and yet one with Him, who appeared when God desired to manifest Himself to the eyes of men; these books call him, "The angel, or *the sent*, of the Lord." In Exodus, God says of this being, "My name¹ is in Him" (xxiii. 21); and in the histories in which He plays a part, His name alternates with that of the Lord Himself. In Isaiah He is called "The angel of His presence" (lxiii. 9), and in Malachi (iii. 1), "The angel of the covenant." In this latter passage He is also called *Adonai*, *Lord*, a title which belongs to God. Beside this mysterious Being, the Old Testament continually speaks of the word of the Lord, whom God sends to the earth to execute His commands, to create and to destroy, to kill and to make alive.² It was by this word that God made the world. (Genesis i.)

The testimony of the Old Testament. A person distinct from and yet one with God.

It was only necessary to put these two ideas

¹ That is to say, the full revelation of My essence.

² Isa. lv. 10, 11; Psa. xxxiii. 6; cvii. 20, etc.

together to arrive at the conclusion that there was a Being, *Divine* like the word of God, and *personal* like the angel of the Lord, and thus to derive from the Old Testament the premises of the idea announced in the preamble of John's Gospel. The Jewish doctors had done this before the Apostle.

The paraphrase of the doctors of the law.

3. *The rabbinical explanation.* — Even before Jesus Christ came, the doctors of the law had taken account of what we have just said; and in the paraphrases which they gave (in contemporary language) of the Old Testament, they had been in the habit of substituting for the name of God, whenever they represented Him as doing anything in the world, the expression *The Word of the Lord* (*Mémar* or *Memra di Jehova*). In the passage in the Old Testament, "God said to the young lad" (Ishmael), Gen. xxi. 20, the rabbinical paraphrase was "The Word of Jehovah" was with. . . Where Jacob said (Gen. xxviii. 21), "The Lord shall be my God," the paraphrase ran "The Word of the Lord shall be my God," and the same throughout the Old Testament. The name "Word" then was employed in Palestine before John wrote, to designate the Divine Being by whom God manifested Himself to the finite world. We also find this expression used in the Apocalypse, the author of which has certainly never been to the school of Philo, and who gives to the glorified Jesus this same name, "*The Word of God*" (xix. 13)

The use of the name "Word" in Palestine before John wrote.

We find St. Paul also using the same idea, without using the same word, in the passage (1 Cor. x. 9) where he speaks of the appearance of Jehovah in the cloud in the wilderness by this name, *The Christ*. John himself, in chap. xii. 41, declares that the Adonai whose glory Isaiah saw (chap. vi.), was no other than the Christ who afterwards appeared as Jesus. We see how familiar this idea was to the Jews at this time. John only applied it, as well as the term which expressed it, to the Divine Being, whom he acknowledged as his Master.

Philo was a Jewish thinker, who, having set out with the teaching of the Old Testament, had gone over to the Greek philosophy and attempted to combine them. John also had the same beginning, but passed into the school of Christ, and made use of the notions and terms employed in the Old Testament to convey to his readers and to the Church what he beheld in the person of his new Master, and what he had heard from His lips. That is the very simple explanation of the resemblance and the difference between these two writers; it is not necessary to send the apostle to the sage of Alexandria to account for it.

Philo and
John.

It is not difficult either to understand, how, that finding himself at Ephesus, in the great intellectual centre where Asiatic and Greek thought met, John made use of this term "The Word,"

an expression of philosophical import. It is as if he wished to say to these thinkers around him, "This knowledge of God which you are seeking for in your high speculations, we Christians possess in the person of Christ, whom we preach unto you, and who is the revelation of God, as a man's word is the revelation of his thought."

Second
objection:
difference
of the
narrative
from that
of the
Synoptics.

Their
harmony.

The
Synoptics
confirm the
fourth
Gospel.

A second class of objections against the origin of this Gospel is drawn from the so-called irreconcilable differences which this narrative presents to the other three. The most considerable of all is certainly that which relates to the principal scene of the ministry of Jesus; according to the Synoptics—Galilee; according to John—Jerusalem and Judea. But as we have already seen, there is abundant room in the narrative of John (in the three months that divide the fourth and fifth chapter, in the month that separate the fifth and sixth, in the seven months that intervene between the sixth and seventh, and lastly, in the three that separate the first part of the tenth chapter from the last), to place all the materials of the Galilean ministry contained in the Synoptics. And as to the journeys to Jerusalem, described by John, and omitted, with the exception of the last, by the other evangelists, not only are they necessary to the comprehension of the final catastrophe, which without them would not have been prepared, but they are confirmed by a number of incidents related

in the Synoptical Gospels, such as the intimate relation with the family at Bethany, which comes out in the visit related by St. Luke (x. 38-42),—we know, in fact, that Bethany is situated about half-a-league from Jerusalem;—also the relations that Jesus must have had with the master of the ass, and the owner of the house where he had His last supper (Luke xix. 30, 31; xxii. 8-12); but especially these words :

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *how often* would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings” (Luke xiii. 34; Matt. xxiii. 37),

related by the Synoptics, certainly prove that Jesus had been at Jerusalem many times before His last visit. John thus does not contradict the Synoptics on this point; according to their own showing, he completes them. And it is the same in all the other cases where he seems to differ from them. Take, for instance, the first calling of the disciples (placed by John in Judea; in Galilee by the Synoptics), or even the purification of the temple (placed by him at the *first* passover; at the *last* by the others), or the place assigned to the anointing of Mary (placed by Matthew and Mark some days later than by John), or lastly, the difference relative to the evening of the last Supper (according to John the eve of the Paschal supper, and, in appearance at least, by the Synoptics, the very evening of the Paschal feast). In all these cases

St. John
completes
the
Synoptics.

it is more and more acknowledged, either that the two narratives are the complement of each other, or that the historic truth, dimly presented by the Synoptics, emerges into full daylight in John's narrative. The cause of this relation between them is easy to understand: the first of these two accounts was written from oral tradition, as the resemblance (often literal) of the three Gospels proves; while John, as an eye-witness, has written, directly, from personal reminiscences, bearing in mind the traditions in order to complete them, and only omitting what had been sufficiently and accurately reported.

Third objection: difference of the discourses from those of the Synoptics, and their resemblance to those of the Baptist and of John himself.

But the chief attack has been made by adversaries on the mode of our Saviour's teaching, presented by St. John, both in its contents and in its form.

We no longer find in it the short and striking maxims, which lent such a popular character to the discourses of Jesus in the Synoptics, and which enter into all the domains of moral life, those "gems of parables" in particular, which leave such an ineffaceable remembrance. There are, in the fourth Gospel, as critics, who deny its authenticity, declare, long pretentious, monotonous, abstract tirades, full of mystical metaphysics, only speaking of Jesus Himself, and His obscure relations to God, and outside of all relation to practical life, and, above all, the doctrine of the pre-existence

of Jesus, which makes a truly human life an impossibility to Him, and substitutes for the heart of man a Logos immoveable and impassable.

As to the style, they further object, that the manner in which the author makes Jesus speak is doubly suspicious; first, because his language has nothing in common with that of the Synoptical discourses, and then there is too much resemblance to the style of the author himself in the prologue and in his Epistles, as well as that which he attributes to John the Baptist in the Gospel.

We do not reply, as has often been done, by pretending that it was by no means impossible that an Apostle should make Jesus speak according to his own fancy, whether in substance or in form. No,—we cannot believe that any one of those who had called Jesus “Master,” who had been struck by the holiness of His person and speech, could have acted in so disrespectful a manner to Him, nor would they have done with respect to His teaching, what Plato, for example, did with respect to that of Socrates. No doubt the words of Jesus suffered in passing through the pen of John, a double transformation. First, as to language, Jesus spoke Aramaic, a language allied to Hebrew, but essentially different to Greek, in which our Gospel is written, and it is natural that in the process of translation, the language of John could not fail more or less to leave its mark upon that of Jesus.

Reply to
third
objection.

The effect of
translation.

John had
not a written
text to
translate
from.

Take the same work, translated by two different persons, who are both authors on their own account, and will you not see that the style of each translation takes the colour of the other works of each author? But there is more: John did not translate a written text, neither did he reproduce, as the Synoptists did, an oral tradition strongly formulated, and in some sort stereotyped. The discourses which he related were written only in his heart, where they were the subject of meditation and continual elaboration. Half a century had nearly elapsed after he had heard them, when he reproduced them in a new language, after having assimilated them spiritually. Under such conditions, it assuredly became very difficult to discern what belonged to the language of Jesus and what to that of John; and we need not be astonished beyond measure, either at the difference of form between the discourses of the fourth Gospel, and those of the other Evangelists on the one hand, or at their resemblance to the other writings of the Apostle, on the other.

Specimen of
Johannine
style in the
Synoptics.

But, happily, we have in the Synoptic Gospels a remarkable specimen of the language habitually used by Jesus in the Gospel of John. We find it in the words in which Jesus expresses the joy that He felt when the seventy returned from their mission, and gave Him an account of their success. Jesus exclaimed:

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Luke x. 21, 22; Matt. xi. 25-27).

Who in reading this passage would not think he had before him the words of the Gospel of John?

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John iii. 35).

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18).

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind" (John ix. 39).

What close relation both in idea and form there is in these words of John to those which we have just quoted from the Synoptics! Some one has called this passage from Matthew and Luke, an erratic Johannine block that has strayed into the Synoptic soil. What is the bearing of this significant fact? Assuredly if a block of granite exists anywhere, there must be neighbouring hills of a homogeneous formation. Thus these words so essentially Johannine in the midst of the Synoptic narrative, prove to us that the kind of language we find in John, is not a creation of his fancy, but that it had its real place in the teaching of our Lord. Perhaps it was necessary, in order that the words of Jesus should take this elevated and

Bearing of
the fact.

sublime strain, which has been called mystic, and which is nothing more than a filial accent in its most perfect form, that a particular emotion should fill his heart, as in the case which we have quoted. Such moments were perhaps exceptional in his life, and in order to apprehend and reproduce them a witness specially prepared was necessary. Every one, even among the apostles, was not capable of following Jesus to such heights as these. If this be the case, then we can understand why the disciple whom Jesus loved was chosen for this rôle, and why he preserved with particular care any such words.

Two modes
of teaching
adopted by
Jesus.

Jesus has Himself characterized the two different modes of teaching which He employed.

"If," said He to Nicodemus, "I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (iii. 12.)

Then he adds,—

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."

There were times then, when He spake to the inhabitants of the earth, the things of earth; these were His moral discourses, like the Sermon on the Mount, where He described the duty of justice, self-renunciation and humility and true piety, all that referred to the relation of man to man and to God. But there were other times when He spoke to the world as coming from heaven, and

as revealing the things of heaven. Then disclosing to mankind the consciousness of His Sonship, He unveiled something of that paternal and filial relation, and tried to make the world understand something of the nature of the Father's gift in sending them His Son, and through His Son, eternal life. It was such words as these especially that John had received into his inmost being, on which he had long meditated, which he sought to reproduce in the nine or ten discourses of Jesus, which he has preserved to us as the most sublime he had heard during the two years and a half that he had passed with Him. He has thus supplemented the other evangelists with respect to the teaching of Jesus, as we have already seen he did with the history.

John
receptive of
of the
heavenly
kind.

But here a grave question arises about this reproduction of the discourses of our Lord in a foreign language, after the lapse of so many years. Might not John have allowed his own ideas to have penetrated into his writing rather than what he remembered of the words of Jesus? Could he always successfully guard himself from such infiltrations, and can we read the discourses contained in his Gospel with the certainty that it is Jesus who speaks, and not the author? To those who believe in the authenticity of this Gospel, and who know consequently that its author was among those to whom Jesus gave this promise,—

The exact
preservation
of the Lord's
discourses in
the fourth
Gospel.

"I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak ; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you " (John xvi. 13, 14 ; xiv. 26),—

Argument
from
inspiration
inadmissible
in this
discussion.

the answer is in this very promise. But face to face with this criticism, we are not allowed to suppose what is in question, and we must examine the objection apart from inspiration.

John puts
the term
" Word "
nowhere
into the
mouth of
Jesus.

The first fact that strikes us is that this term *Word*, which is inscribed at the beginning of the prologue, which plays such a great part in it, which consequently contained in it all that John felt and conceived of the person of Jesus, is nowhere put by him into the mouth of the Lord. And yet he had ample opportunity of doing so, particularly when he relates in the tenth chapter the reply of Jesus to those who were about to stone Him because He made Himself God—

" Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods ? " (v. 34.)

(it is thus the Psalmist addressed the Israelite judges, as organs of divine justice),

" If then," added Jesus, " the law calls them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ? " (v. 35, 36.)

One would expect to hear after the words *say ye*

of *Him*, these: "Who is the Word itself;" but Jesus only adds—

"Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world."

The Evangelist has not here yielded to the temptation to put into the mouth of Jesus his favourite expression, even when the connexion of the discourse would naturally have led him to do so. This reserve is so much the more remarkable as the name Word given to Jesus is found not only in the prologue of the Gospel, but also in the two other works of this author, in the first Epistle (i. 1), and in the Apocalypse (xix. 13).

We find in the prologue of the Gospel a still more important idea, which is expressed in such a way as to show us clearly what an important place it had in the mind of our author. It is that of the creation and preservation of all things by the Word. It would have been very easy for him to have put this idea into the mouth of Jesus, and that in many places, but especially in that passage of His intercessory prayer, where our Lord says to His Father:

Nor the idea
of creation
and pre-
servation
by the
Word.

"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24).

But the author refrained from doing it. The expression, "*to be born of God*," is found in the

Nor the
expression
"to be born
of God."

He thus
distinguishes
between the
thoughts of
Jesus and
his own.

Three
objections
from the
interview
with
Nicodemus.

prologue, and occurs nine or ten times in the First Epistle of St. John. It was then very familiar to our author, yet nevertheless we do not meet with it once in the discourses of Jesus, not even in His conversation with Nicodemus, where it would have come in so naturally when He was speaking of "being born of water and of the Spirit" (ch. iii. 5). We see then with what delicacy our author ever respects the line of demarcation between the thoughts of Jesus and his own, and even between the expressions of Jesus and his own.

Three examples are often cited to prove that this Evangelist did not always manifest a similar reserve. The first is at the close of the interview with Nicodemus (ch. iii. from ver. 16), where it is pretended that he puts his own reflections into the mouth of Jesus, and that all this moral judgment wrought in the world by the Gospel has no natural place in this discourse. But, as Jesus had at the commencement of it put the new birth in opposition to the works of the law, the Messianic revelation to the old, then the elevation of Christ on the cross to His elevation on a throne, he closes by showing the contrast between the judgment or spiritual sifting which the Gospel effects, to the judgment which the Pharisees dreamed of, assigning salvation to the Jews and damnation to the heathen. It was thus that Jesus opposed His own

to the Pharisaic programme along the whole line, in His conversation with Nicodemus. We must then not detach this last passage from the rest of the conversation to which it belongs organically.

The discourse which John puts into the mouth of John the Baptist in the third chapter, from the twenty-seventh verse, in reply to the jealous reproaches of his disciples about the conduct of Jesus, is also quoted. The Evangelist, they say, makes the forerunner speak exactly in the same way as the Lord, and both speak absolutely like himself in the prologue and in the Epistle. But they forget that when the Baptist said, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand," he only reproduces the words of God at the baptism of Jesus, at which he had taken part: "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." They also forget that the resemblance between this discourse of the forerunner and the words of Jesus to Nicodemus (chap. iii. 1-21) is explained by the Baptist himself, when comparing himself to the friend of the bridegroom, he adds that he had heard the Bridegroom's voice, and his heart had leapt for joy (ver. 29). We may therefore conclude that the words of Jesus had been reported to him, and that they made his joy perfect. Let us not disregard the inimitable originality of the central words of this discourse of John: "He must increase, but

Objection
from the
discourse
attributed
to John the
Baptist.
John iii.

Objection
from the
retrospect
of the
development
of Jewish
unbelief.

I must decrease" (ver. 30), for surely no one could have invented those words. It is the forerunner who thus spake, it is the theme of his entire discourse.

As to the third example that is usually quoted,—the discourse which ends the retrospective *coup d'œil* of the development of Jewish unbelief (xii. 44–50), it is evident that this is not the report of a special discourse. Had he not just said that "Jesus went away, and hid Himself from them"? How after that could He have made Jesus speak again to them? As he recapitulates in the thirty-seventh verse all the miracles of Jesus, he gives from verses forty-four to fifty a *summary* of all His teaching, in order to show what terrible responsibility rested on the people that had rejected Him, Who had spoken and acted in such a manner.

Comparison
of the
Lord's dis-
courses with
the first
Epistle.

We have now verified the difference that may be observed between the prologue and the discourses of the Gospel. We arrive at an analogous result by comparing these same discourses with the First Epistle. It is easy to convince ourselves that if the same spirit reigns in both these, it is not the same thought that has dictated these two kinds of composition. The author of the Epistle often recurs to the idea of *expiation*.

"Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2, and elsewhere).

Well! This truth, which had been clearly revealed to this Apostle only after the death of

Jesus on the cross, does not come out explicitly in the discourses of the Gospel, which proves that he did not compose them at a later period and in his own style. The advent of the *Anti-Christ*, which plays such an important part in the Epistle, is entirely omitted in the discourses of Jesus in the Gospel. He there foretells persecutions, but does not say a word about this supreme and powerful seduction. It is the same with the *false teachers*, against whom John warns us in his Epistle. He might have made Jesus announce them in the Gospel, but he does nothing of the sort. He frequently speaks in the Epistle of the *glorious return* of Jesus which was approaching, but this thought occupies no place in the Gospel narrative. Jesus here announced only His own coming in spirit on the Day of Pentecost, John not having related the great discourse on the last things recorded in Matt. xxiv., in which Jesus had announced His visible return, although he fully believed in this return, which he knew and admitted, (as his Epistle proves), he did not feel at liberty to introduce this subject into the Lord's discourses recorded in his Gospel. Neither has he lent to Jesus certain expressions which were peculiarly his own, as we see from his Epistle, such, for example, as the *anointing of the Holy Spirit*, "*of the sent of God*," and "*the sin unto death*."

Omissions
in the
Gospel of
truths
contained in
the Epistle.

Lastly, let us notice one more general feature.

General-
isations in
the Epistle.

It is easier to establish a firmer intellectual and logical attitude in the discourses of the Gospel than in the Epistle, which leads to the thought that in the former the author had the support of a higher thought than his own, and that consequently they are not his own work. And if we compare more closely the contents of these two compositions, drawn up by the same pen, we shall easily perceive that their author, in composing the Epistle, has generalized, and given us under the form of axioms or maxims, the thoughts expressed in the Gospel in regard to certain special positions. "God so loved the world," Jesus had said; "God is Love," says John. "I am the Light of the world," said Jesus; "God is Light," says John. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said Jesus; "He who committeth sin is of the devil," writes John. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," said Jesus to the apostles; "It is not we who first loved God," writes John, "but God who first loved us." The whole Epistle is composed in a similar manner. John extracts from the occasional and striking remarks of his Master, doctrines and, in a certain sense, religious philosophy, useful for all ages, which are contained in them. Who could imagine that the mind that performed this second operation, could be the same as that which revealed itself with such a creative originality and appropriateness in these discourses?

The conclusion to be drawn from all these facts is that, whatever is the resemblance that exists between the discourses of the Gospel and the other writings of the Apostle, there are between these compositions, differences both in contents and in form sufficiently marked to attest a difference of origin between them, and consequently to prove the historical truth of the former.

Moreover, does it not strike every one who has a sense of divine things, that Jesus alone could have spoken as the author of the fourth Gospel makes Him speak? If we admit that there was in the second century a man who was able to make Him speak in such a manner, we must also admit that there existed in the second century a second Jesus, not only equal, but superior to the first. Baur has really supposed the existence at this epoch of some eminent Christian whom he has called the *Great Unknown*. Now-a-days critics refer the existence of this mysterious author nearer to the time of John, they even make him a disciple of this Apostle, from whom he received this spiritual heritage. They ask, for example, whether it might not be that presbyter John, disciple of Jesus, who according to Papias ought to have lived in Asia Minor at the same time and a little later than the Apostle of the same name. But we have only to glance at the writings that we have of the most remarkable men of this period, Clement of Rome, Ignatius of

Comparison
with other
writers of
the first part
of the
second
century.

Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Papias of Hierapolis, to see the immense distance that there is between these fathers and the author of this Gospel, and to understand how he must have shined as a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of the Church, and to conclude that he could not have passed unperceived in the midst of men who were so inferior to him, and could not have remained the Great Unknown.

Internal
evidence of
authorship.

Besides, had we no tradition pointing positively to the Apostle John as the author of this Gospel we might by attentively studying this Gospel, put our finger on the author.

The writer a
Jew.

The fourth Evangelist could only have been a Christian of *Jewish* origin. That is proved by what we have advanced concerning his style and the spirit of his writings.

A Pales-
tinian con-
temporary
with Jesus.

This Judeo-Christian could only have been a Christian of *Palestine* and *contemporary* with Jesus. He knew the minutest details of the different localities of the Holy Land, the size of the Lake of Tiberias, the distance from Bethany to Jerusalem, for instance. He described the country about Jacob's well as, according to M. Renan, only a man could do who had frequently passed it. He is *au fait* as to the relationship between the two high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. He knows exactly how many years they have been rebuilding the Temple when Jesus visits Jerusalem for the first

time after His baptism; he knew that the Romans had taken from the Jews the right of capital punishment, etc., etc.

This Palestinian contemporary of Jesus, is a A companion of Jesus. *member of the intimate circle of friends*, formed around the person of the Lord. He knew personally the Apostles Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Peter, etc., and the kind of relation that Jesus had to each of them. The naïve replies of Philip, the spiteful remarks of Judas, the cry of devotion mingled with the unbelief of Thomas, are all known to him. He knew who were the four disciples who by their questions drew forth the instructions of Jesus at that intimate conversation they had with Him on the eve of His death. He knew the name of the high priest's servant, whose ear Peter cut off in Gethsemane; he recalls the smallest details of the course of the two disciples at the grave of Jesus on the morning of the resurrection, etc., etc. All that would only have been disgusting charlatanism on the part of a man who had not lived in close intimacy with the apostles, and would consequently only treat the disciples as characters in a romance.

This companion of Jesus could only have been An Apostle one of His *apostles*. He allows himself in many points to complete and present in a quite new light the tradition received in the Church, as we find it recorded in the Synoptics. The narrative

of the fourth Gospel is equivalent to a complete renovation of the history of Jesus transmitted by the Synoptics, harmonizing very well with them, but remaining absolutely independent. Only an apostle, who felt perfectly sure of his authority in the Church, could stand face to face with the most ancient Gospels, already received in the churches, and maintain such a position.

The disciple
whom Jesus
loved.

This apostle could be no other than the *disciple whom Jesus loved*. This is clearly proved by the intimate and personal details that are found in the narrative, particularly the information about the secret communications between Peter and this disciple at the last Supper (xiii. 24-27), or the absolutely autobiographical details of the manner in which this disciple was brought to believe in the resurrection (xx. 8, 9), or the indication of the moment where he understood the accomplishment of Zechariah's prophecy about Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem (xii. 16), the testimony that the author gives us of his presence at the foot of the cross (xix. 35). This testimony can only apply to the disciple "whom Jesus loved," because he is the only one whose presence in the scene with the mother of Jesus is recorded in the narrative. See the touching words in ver. 26.

The son of
Zebedee.

The disciple whom Jesus loved could only be *John, the son of Zebedee*. That is evident from the fact that the other disciples that he speaks of are

all designated in the Gospel by their names—Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Nathanael, etc.,—while the names of John and his brother James nowhere appear. We see the same thing also in chap. xxi. 2, where the two sons of Zebedee, who in all the lists of the Apostles are at the head, are here placed the last, after the other Apostles, and only before two disciples, not Apostles. Now, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who takes part in this scene, according to v. 20 and 21, can not have been James, the other son of Zebedee, for he was dead at a very early date (Acts xii. 2). It can only have been John, his brother. Lastly—and we have here the plainest proof—the disciple whom Jesus loved must have been among the three Apostles preferred by the Lord, viz., Peter, James, and John. Now, it could not be Peter, who, according to the narrative, is distinguished from him, nor James, who died the first of the Apostles, while the disciple whom Jesus loved must have survived all the others, according to ch. xxi. 23. It could then be no other than John.

It is consequently with the fullest confidence that the Church as a whole, and every Christian, can make use of this Gospel, at once so simple and so sublime. The perusal of ten lines of this narrative is the best proof of its authenticity for every upright mind. This intimate and continuous communion with God as a Father could not

The true
proof.

have been imagined, it must have been lived to be contemplated, and contemplated to be recorded in this manner. It is as if the gate of heaven were opened to the view of the dwellers on earth, in order, as the author of this unique book says in conclusion, that every reader may find life in the revelation of Jesus, the Christ, Son of God, as he himself had found life in it.



THE AUTHENTICITY

OF THE

FOUR PRINCIPAL EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL

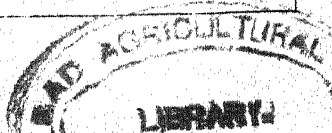
BY
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"STUDIES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT;" "STUDIES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT;"
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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.



Argument of the Tract.

THE Tract is designed to show to those who are not familiar with the subject, or may still be in doubt about it, the grounds on which the most eminent scholars of every school of criticism receive as authentic the Four Principal Epistles ascribed to St. Paul.

Three classes of considerations reviewed—

1. *Comparative*.—In this section the perfect harmony between the Acts of the Apostles and these Epistles is proved by a careful comparison between them.

2. *Historical*.—In this section the history of Christian Literature from the times of the Apostles is adduced for the purpose of proving the existence and rapid dissemination of the Four Epistles in question, and the authority they exercised in the Churches as Apostolic works.

3. *Moral*.—In this section the character of the author, as it comes out in the Epistles, is examined; and it is shown to be utterly incompatible with the numberless frauds which must be imputed to him if the Pauline authorship be denied. The still greater difficulty of believing that they were written by four authors is pointed out. The testimony of various rationalistic writers in favour of the genuineness of the Epistles is quoted.

In conclusion, it is shown, from these Epistles, what the Church thought of Christ twenty-seven years after His death, and even before that date.

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THE AUTHENTICITY

OF THE

FOUR PRINCIPAL EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.



CHRISTIAN antiquity has transmitted to us, in the canon of the New Testament, thirteen epistles which bear the name of the Apostle Paul, and a fourteenth, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is anonymous, has been ascribed to him by a part of the ancient church.

The
Pauline
Epistles.

The
Epistle
to the
Hebrews.

With respect to the first thirteen, it does not seem that any doubt was raised about their authenticity in the first centuries of the Christian era. Different sects rejected this or that book because it did not harmonise with their ideas. But since the revival of criticism, the authorship of several of them, viz., the Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians, and the Philippians, as well as the Pastoral Epistles, has been disputed by a certain number of theologians. There are four, however, viz., the Epistle to the Romans, the two to the Corin-

The
authenti-
city
of thirteen
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in the first
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since the
revival of
criticism.

Four
undisputed.

Evanson,
Bruno
Bauer, and
Loman
deemed of
no
importance.

thians, and the Epistle to the Galatians, which have never been questioned by any great representative scholar. Ferdinand Baur, the founder of the most advanced school of criticism, far from rejecting them, has made them the basis of his theory of the historical origin of Christianity. And the objections raised against their authenticity by two or three scholars, determined, it seems, to leave nothing standing (Evanson in England, Bruno Bauer in Germany, A. D. Loman in Holland), have been deemed of so little importance that one of the most advanced scholars of the liberal school has assigned them a place only, as he says, "in the history of criticism"¹

It is to these four *universally accepted* Epistles that we shall now direct our thoughts. We shall consider the grounds of their universal reception in the Christian church as the composition of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

I.

THE OBJECT AND CONTENTS OF THE FOUR EPISTLES.

The
object
of the
Epistle to
the Romans.

THE Epistle to the Romans, which is generally placed at the beginning of the whole collection, was designed to furnish an exposition of the Christian faith to a church which had never

¹ Holtzman, *Einführung in's Neue Testament*, 1885, p. 224.

been visited by Paul or by any other apostle, and consequently had never received any oral instruction on the subject. As Paul had always been in the habit of giving a continuous exposition of the Gospel in the churches which he founded,¹ he wished, in the Epistle to the Romans, to supply this want with respect to the church of the capital of the world. This appears to us the most natural way of accounting for the general and systematic scope of the Epistle to the Romans. Paul himself reminds them at the commencement that it had not been possible for him up to that time to visit Rome to preach the Gospel, and thus he clears the way for the complete exposition of the Gospel of Christ, "which is the power of God unto salvation."²

The systematic scope of the Epistle accounted for.

The two Epistles to the Corinthians, which follow that to the Romans in our canonical Scriptures, have quite a different purpose, as might be inferred from the fact that Paul himself founded the church at Corinth, and sojournd two years in that city. He had then given them a complete and exhaustive exposition of the Christian verities. In the first of these Epistles he replied to certain questions concerning the Christian life which had been put to him by

The Epistles to the Corinthians.

Questions discussed in the First Epistle.

¹ Compare especially Acts xix. 9, 10: "Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

² Romans i. 16.

the church at Corinth, and he corrected certain errors that had crept into the private and public lives of these converted heathen. For he had heard of the doings of the Corinthians through other channels than the letters they had written to him.

The
purpose of
the Second
Epistle.

The Second Epistle was written with the intention of drawing closer the bonds which united the Apostle to the better portion of the church, bonds which had been seriously loosened through dissension; then he wished, before he himself went to Corinth, to bring into order a factious minority, which had, for the time being, infused an evil spirit into the community.

The
Epistle to
the
Galatians.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle energetically resisted the attempt made by Christians of Jewish origin to bring the church of Galatia under the yoke of Mosaic ceremonies, especially their desire to compel it to adopt circumcision and observe Jewish festivals; as if Israel only were God's people, and the Gentiles could not be saved through faith in Christ unless they complied with the requirements of the Jewish law. He laid down the bases of evangelical liberty and Christian life.

The
basis of
evangelical
liberty and
Christian
life laid
down.

Our task is to show the grounds on which these four Epistles have been received without hesitation by the church in all ages as the work of the Apostle Paul. For this purpose we shall have to weigh

three classes of considerations: *comparative, historical, and moral.*

II.

COMPARATIVE CONSIDERATIONS.

By these we understand the relation of these letters to each other, and to other writings of the New Testament, especially to the Acts of the Apostles.

The relation of these Epistles to each other, and the other New Testament writings.

We are aware that doubts have been cast on the truth of the narrative contained in the book of Acts, and we shall not in this Tract extend the bounds of the discussion by undertaking its defence. We only remark in passing that what a certain section of the critics contest is not so much the reality of the facts related in the narrative in the Acts as the light in which these facts are presented. How is it possible to deny the foundation of the Judeo-Christian church by St. Peter at Jerusalem, and the rapid extension of this church in Palestine? How is it possible to deny the fact of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the dispersion of the church, which resulted from it, as well as the foundation of the church at Antioch to which this dispersion gave rise? How can the conversion of young Saul or his three missionary journeys during which he founded the church, first in the southern parts of Asia

The Acts of the Apostles.

What certain critics contest in the Acts of the Apostles.

Minor, then in Greece, in Macedonia, and Achaia, and lastly at Ephesus and in the surrounding districts of Asia Minor be called in question? How can his voyage to Rome and the shipwreck related at the close of the Acts be disputed? Without these facts the existence of the church in the world would be like an effect without a cause. We shall have to compare the historical references scattered through the Epistles with the accounts given in the book which has preserved the record of these great events. We take the Epistles in the order of their composition.

The comparison to be instituted between the Epistles and Acts.

The state of affairs revealed in the Epistle to the Galatians.

The position of affairs which is revealed in the Epistle to the Galatians, is this: Paul had visited a short time previously the churches of Galatia, and had left them confirmed in the truth of the gospel. This is clear from the words which follow the address of his letter: i. 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." These words "*so soon*" imply that the change took place rapidly, during the short time that had elapsed since the last visit of St. Paul and his writing the letter. We may conclude from another passage, that this was Paul's second visit to Galatia, and not the first during which he had founded the church. He wrote to them, iv. 13: "Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at *the first*."

St. Paul's second visit to Galatia.

The Greek term which corresponds to this last word indicates that it was the first of *two*. Now Paul had made three great missionary journeys: the first and least extensive with Barnabas to Cyprus and the south of Asia Minor (Lycaonia and Pisidia); the second, of far greater extent, with Silas and Timothy, in which, after having traversed Asia Minor, he founded the churches of Greece (Macedonia and Achaia); the third, geographically half-way between the two first, in which St. Paul settled at Ephesus, at the western extremity of Asia Minor. He could not have founded the churches of Galatia in the first of these journeys, for he remained with Barnabas in the southern provinces of Asia Minor. It must, therefore, have been in the second journey that he arrived in Galatia for the first time; and in the third that he visited these churches for the second time, immediately before their falling away, for which he reproaches them at the beginning of his Epistle. This appears from the words of St. Paul in Gal. i. 6 and ii. 13, and exactly agrees with the details which St. Luke gives us of the commencement of the second journey in Acts xvi. 1-8, and of the third in Acts xviii. 22, 23.

His three missionary journeys.

His visits to Galatia.

The evidence of the Epistle in agreement with the Acts of the Apostles.

At the beginning of the account of Paul's second voyage (Acts xvi. 6, R.V.), Luke says, "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak

the Word in Asia, and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." Then, at the beginning of the narrative of the third voyage, it is said (xviii. 23), "He went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, *strengthening all the disciples.*" The first of these two passages evidently refers to his visit when he founded the church; but he tells us nothing of this event. From Gal. iv. 13, 14 we learn that Paul was at that time detained in Galatia by sickness. The second refers to the visit which immediately preceded the Epistle. We must conclude from the manner in which St. Paul expresses himself that he found the churches already unsettled, but that he succeeded in *confirming* them. The Epistle and the narrative in the Acts are, therefore, in harmony with each other, although the accounts are thoroughly independent of each other.

The
Epistle and
the Acts
of the
Apostles
harmonious
but in-
dependent.

The First
Epistle to
Corinthians
written at
Ephesus.

The account
of Paul's
residence in
Ephesus in
the Acts.

At the time he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul was at Ephesus, and intended to remain some time there (xvi. 8). This account refers to a period subsequent to that of the Epistle to the Galatians, to the long sojourn in Ephesus during his third missionary journey, and rather towards the end of his stay there, than at the beginning. Now we read in the Acts of the Apostles (xix. and xx.) that Paul passed three years in the countries of which Ephesus was the centre, and that he had

founded a great number of churches. This harmonizes also with the language of Paul at the close of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xvi. 9), "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me."

Churches founded in the country round Ephesus.

More than once in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul mentions that he had sent Timothy into Greece, especially to Corinth (iv. 17; xvi. 10). Now this is what we read in the Acts when the writer is giving an account of the same period (xix. 21, 22): "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he *sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus*; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season." This was a solemn moment in the Apostle's life. The West called him, and he must prepare to leave Asia and Greece. But in order to do that he had measures to take, one in particular which we shall refer to immediately. This was the reason why Paul sent Timothy, his faithful disciple, into Greece. He himself purposed to follow at a later period. The situation described in the Acts is therefore in all points the same as in the First Corinthians, but with such differences in details and expressions that it is impossible to imagine either sketch to have been borrowed from the other.

Allusions to Timothy's mission to Greece in the First Epistle to the Corinthians and in the Acts.

Agreements and differences between the two accounts.

The
references
to Apollos
in the First
Epistle to
the
Corinthians.

The
explanation
furnished in
the Acts of
the Apostles.

The
undesignated
character
of the
explanation.

The
situation
presupposed
in the
Second
Epistle
to the
Corinthians.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, i.-iv., mention is made of a certain teacher, named Apollos, to whom one party was passionately attached, preferring his teaching to that of the Apostle Paul himself. This teacher is again spoken of in chapter xvi. He was with Paul at Ephesus; and Paul said that he had begged him to return to Corinth, and that Apollos had absolutely refused to do so, evidently because Apollos was disgusted with the part his partisans wished him to play in opposition to Paul. All this is naturally explained by the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles at the close of chapter xviii. According to this account this Apollos was a Jew of Alexandria, a powerful and eloquent man who had been brought to the knowledge of the Gospel by Aquila and Priscilla, friends of Paul, living at that time at Ephesus; and after having instructed him more fully, they sent him with letters of recommendation in order that he might in some respects take the Apostle's place in Corinth. The narrative in the Acts furnishes an easy explanation of all that we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians, but without any allusion that could make the reader suspect that it had been written for this purpose.

The situation that is presupposed by the Second Epistle to the Corinthians is this. The Apostle had just passed through a great tribulation in Asia which might even have cost him his life. He had

afterwards set out for Troas, a town situated to the north of Ephesus, and from thence to Macedonia, with the intention of meeting Titus whom he had sent to Corinth (ii. 12, 13). He had at last found him in Macedonia (ch. vii.), and his heart was filled with consolation by the news he brought him of the good feelings entertained by the Corinthians towards him. He now purposed to send him back immediately with this letter, in order to expedite a good work which he had in his mind at this time, to which we shall presently refer. He purposed to follow soon after himself, to make a prolonged sojourn, as he had promised them for some time past. All these details agree with what we read in ch. xix. and xx. of the Acts. The severe tribulation through which the Apostle had passed doubtless refers to the popular rising excited by the silversmith Demetrius, which is described in chapter xix. The beginning of chapter xx. shows us the Apostle setting out immediately after for Macedonia. Then, after a sojourn in that northern province, he goes into Southern Greece, to Corinth, where he remains three whole months (xx. 3). The accounts differ in form, but there is a fundamental agreement between them.

The account of Paul's movements in the Acts of the Apostles.

The fundamental agreement but formal differences in the accounts.

We gather from several details in the Epistle to the Romans that it was during these three months passed in Corinth that Paul wrote this Epistle.

The Epistle to the Romans written at Corinth.

Paul declares in it that he had finished his task as preacher of the Gospel in the East, from Jerusalem to the Adriatic. He had then to seek a new field of labour in the West, and for that purpose to go as far as Spain (ch. xv. 18-24). The three months spent at Corinth, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, are just then the very time of rest, during which this Epistle was written, and the time that divides the ministry of the Apostle into two great portions.

The three months' sojourn at Corinth divides the ministry of the Apostle into two great portions.

Recommendation of Phoebe of Cenchrea to the Romans.

Church at Cenchrea referred to in the Acts.

Confirmation of the fact that the Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth.

Paul recommended to the Romans Phoebe, a deaconess of Cenchrea. Cenchrea was the port of Corinth on the west shore of the Ægean Sea, and we are incidentally told in the Acts that there was a church there, where St. Paul had spent some little time (xviii. 18). The narrative in the Acts and the references in the Epistles are thus in perfect harmony with each other in reference to dates as well as places. The fact of the composition of this Epistle at Corinth is elsewhere confirmed by the name of the host of the Apostle, Gaius, one of the oldest converts of the Corinthian church (comp. Rom. xvi. 23, with 1 Cor. i. 14).

We have still two particulars to mention here, which are all the more remarkable because they link these four Epistles closely together, as well as connect them with the narrative in the Acts. We refer first to the development of the strife between the Apostle and his Judaising adversaries.

The strife between the Apostle and the Judaisers.

We find it in Galatia in its first stage. The adversaries from Jerusalem, after passing through Antioch, arrived in Galatia in Asia Minor, and sought to impose on the ignorant people the most painful of their rites, that of circumcision (v. 2; vi. 12).

First stage
in Galatia.

In a more advanced stage, and among a more cultivated people, in Greece, at Corinth, such a thing would not have been possible. The strange teachers who were seeking to use the Mosaic law for their own profit in the Gentile churches founded by St. Paul were clever enough to give a more *spirituel* character to their hostility at Corinth. They made a violent attack on the person of the Apostle, and tried to induce the church to revolt against his authority, and to bring it under the influence of a legal spirit. It was at this point that the strife culminated. The Epistles to the Corinthians emphasise this point.

A more
advanced
stage at
Corinth.

Finally, the calm and masterly exposition of the Epistle to the Romans shows us that the victory was henceforth assured, at least, spiritually. This Epistle is like a trophy erected on the field of battle; the polemical tone has disappeared, the adversary has laid down his arms. We find then very plainly in these four writings the marks of a true history, and can follow the important drama which marks this decisive epoch.

The
Epistle to
the Romans
shows the
spiritual
victory.

The same thing holds good with respect to

The
collection
for the poor
saints at
Jerusalem.

Uncertainty
as to its
success.

The
definite
result.

The
various
references to
the subject
in the
different
Epistles
form
one whole.

another particular, yet more special. In 1 Corinthians (xvi. 1), the Apostle speaks of a collection he had organised in the different churches for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem. He had already made suitable arrangements for this purpose in the churches of Galatia, which had returned to their allegiance to him after their seducers had been driven away. Paul adds (xvi. 4) that if the collection was successful at Corinth, he himself would accompany the deputies of the churches who were taking it to Jerusalem. This collection is again spoken of more fully in the viii. and ix. chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. We see that Paul is still uncertain as to the success of this work, to which he attaches great importance. While the poor Macedonians had shown themselves generous, the rich Corinthians seemed less disposed to give; it was to stimulate their zeal that he sent Titus to Corinth with this Second Epistle, in order that, when he himself arrived, all might be ready.

In the Epistle to the Romans we find the definite result that accrued from all these efforts. Paul, before going to Rome, has now decided to set out to Jerusalem, in order himself to be the bearer of the collection remitted by the hands of the deputies, chosen by the churches for this purpose (Rom. xv. 25-32). We see how all these accounts scattered through the different Epistles

unite to form one harmonious whole. The passage in the Acts (xx. 1-4) confirms in a striking manner the situation revealed in the Epistles. This passage, in fact, gives us a list of the persons who were to accompany Paul from Greece to Jerusalem, and who were all gathered round him at Corinth. For the list contained in the fourth verse can only be the names of those deputies of the churches of whom Paul spoke to the Corinthians (xvi. 3), and who were commissioned to carry to Jerusalem the amount of the collection. Nevertheless Luke enumerates them without even indicating the reason of their being there, so little does he concern himself in his narrative with what is contained in the Epistles.

The Epistles confirmed by the Acts of the Apostles.

The deputies to carry the collection to Jerusalem.

It is to be noticed that among these deputies he mentions a Sopater of Macedonia. This is probably the same person on whose behalf he salutes the church in the Epistle to the Romans, written at this time from Corinth (xvi. 21).

St. Luke has not thought fit to speak in his narrative of this large collection, which was made at the close of Paul's ministry in the East. This is the more remarkable because he puts into the mouth of the Apostle, when he was pleading before Felix, these words (Acts xxiv. 17): "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings." In these few words, which might so easily pass unnoticed, is virtually summarised all

St. Luke's reticence as to the collection.

Summary of all that the Epistles to the Corinthians and Romans say of it.

that the Epistles to the Corinthians and Romans tell us about this collection. Such a complete and yet unobtrusive an agreement cannot possibly have been a fabrication. I wish to conclude this part of the Tract with two quotations from two of the most distinguished scholars that modern Germany has produced, and who have given more than sufficient proofs of their complete independence of all traditional notions about the sacred books, —words which are like a summary of all the preceding discussion. One quotation is from Schleiermacher, in his 'Introduction to the New Testament' (p. 148). It refers to the two Epistles to the Corinthians and at the same time to the 1st Thessalonians.

The
conclusion
of Schleier-
macher.

"When we compare several passages in the Acts of the Apostles in chs. xviii., xix., xx., with the personal details which we find at the beginning and end of these Epistles, we can fit into one another the facts deduced from these two kinds of writing (Acts and Epistles) in such a manner that they mutually supplement each other, without either of them ceasing to have its own peculiarity, or the possibility of one having been written to suit the other."

Ferdinand
Baur on
the Epistles
to the
Corinthians.

The second quotation is from Ferdinand Baur, in the first edition of his well-known work, "The Apostle Paul." He says, speaking of the two Epistles to the Corinthians (p. 260):—

"The great interest which these two remarkable letters of St. Paul excite, arises from the fact that they carry us more completely than any other writing of the New Testament into

the midst of the living Christian Church in a state of formation, and afford us a view of the circumstances in the midst of which the new life evoked by Christianity assumes its own character."

We may therefore conclude that as the book of Acts furnishes us with a true framework of the ministry of the Apostle, these four Epistles give us materials to fill in the picture; they are like fragments of his heart and life during the course of that agitated period of which they trace for us the affecting incidents. The Epistle to the Galatians gives us an account of the first outburst of the strife; the two Epistles to the Corinthians show us its most acute phase; that to the Romans is the monument of the triumphant issue of it.

The relation of the Acts of the Apostles to the undisputed Epistles of St. Paul.

III.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

THE history of Christian literature, from the period which followed the times of the Apostles, confirms the result to which the study of the New Testament has led us, showing, as it does, by positive evidence the existence and the rapid dissemination of these four Epistles in the Christian communities, as well as the authority they exercised in the churches, as Apostolic writings.

Confirmation from post-Apostolic Christian literature.

St. Paul died between the years A.D. 64 and 67. Some twenty years later, two writings are met with; one dated from Rome towards the end of

Domitian's reign (about the year 95); the other, probably, composed at Alexandria about the same time, according to some a little later, from which we learn the impressions, more or less distinct, which were made on the minds of the authors by the Epistles of the Apostle which we are now considering.

Clement's
Epistle
to the
Corinthians.

The first of these writings is a letter that one of the bishops of the church at Rome, named Clement, was instructed by his church to write to the Corinthian church, in which a kind of ecclesiastical insurrection had arisen against the presbyters appointed by the Apostle, which had caused a great disturbance. The names of the deputies who were appointed to carry this letter are still known. They are Claudius Ephebius and Valerius Bito. There was a third, named Fortunatus, sufficiently clearly distinguished from the others,¹ and who might be the Christian from Corinth who had brought the news to Rome of what was going on in the former city. It is not impossible that it was the same Fortunatus, who, more than thirty years before, had come to visit Paul at Ephesus as a deputy from Corinth (xvi. 10).

Its
indisputable
authenticity.

The authenticity of this letter is indisputable. More than half a century later, the Bishop of Corinth, Denys, writing to the Roman bishop, Soter, says to him,

¹ Epistle of Clement, c. 65, 1.

"We have to-day celebrated the holy day of our Lord, and read your letter, and are careful always to re-read it for our correction, as well as the preceding one, written to us by Clement."¹

Thus we see that the letter from Clement was carefully preserved in the archives of the church at Corinth, and was read from time to time for the instruction and reproof of the community. How therefore can its authenticity be doubted, especially if we recall the severe reproofs which are administered to those to whom it is addressed? This letter of Clement from Rome is the most undeniable witness to the authenticity of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. This is, in fact, what the bishop wrote to the Corinthians in this letter (46 and 47):—

The preservation of Clement's Epistle.

Its undeniable testimony to the authenticity of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

"Why have there entered among you rivalries, wrath, dissensions, schisms, and discord? Have we not all one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of grace shed upon us, and one calling in Christ? Why do we disagree and scatter the members of Christ, and excite schism in the one body, and carry our dissensions to such an extent that we forget we are members one of another? Woe to such a man! It would have been better had he never been born. . . . Your schism has perverted many, discouraged others, caused some to doubt; it has filled us all with sorrow, and yet you persist in your sedition! Refer again to the letter of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the beginning, when the Gospel was first preached to you? Indeed, he himself, under the direction of the Spirit, wrote to you about himself, Cephas, and Apollos, because even then you were full of rivalries. But that dissension was less culpable than the present, for at that time your infatuation concerned the il-

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv. 31.

lustrious apostles (Paul, Peter) and a man approved by them (Apollus). But now you see who those are that trouble you, and destroy your brotherly love. These things that we have heard are a disgrace to you, and unworthy of Christians, that one or two men should lead the old established church of Corinth to rebel against the elders. And this report has not only reached us, but also others who are strangers to our faith, so that, on account of your folly, the name of the Lord is blasphemed."

The
Pauline
authorship
of the First
Epistle
to the
Corinthians
undisputed
at Rome.

Impossible
to have
been a
forgery.

Thus we see that the Pauline authorship of the First Epistle to the Corinthians was not doubted at Rome any more than it was at Corinth, to which church it was written, for Clement quoted from the text of it when he wrote this passage (compare 1 Cor. i. 12 and iv. 6). Clement reminded the members of the church of it as an Apostolic Epistle in order to humble them. Under these circumstances we cannot see how the most resolute scepticism can deny its authenticity. If we suppose that a forger sent it to the church of Corinth during the lifetime of Paul, how did it happen that he, when he visited this church, did not discover the fraud? And if the letter had been a forgery, and sent to Corinth after his death, would not the Corinthians, before depositing it in their archives, have asked if it were possible that this letter, which only arrived after the death of Paul, could have come from the Apostle, all the more as they were severely reprimanded in it for their vanity, levity, want of wisdom, of love and

of Christian honour? Such a letter would not have been received, and deposited in their archives, unless they had good reason to believe in its genuineness.

We shall not enumerate other passages in which Clement of Rome quoted textually the First Corinthians. There are four principal ones. Then he also uses some expressions in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which prove that he had that Epistle, as well as the First, in his possession at Rome. Let us compare the following words (chap. xxx.), "Let our praise be of God, and not of ourselves," with 1 Cor. iv. 5, and 2 Cor. x. 18, and (chap. xxxvi.), "By Him, Christ, we behold, as in a mirror, His perfect and sublime face," with 2 Cor. iii. 18. The same Clement also uses the Epistle to the Romans. His enumeration of the vices of the heathen (chap. xxxv.) is an evident reproduction, though a free one, of that in Rom. i. 29-32.

"Casting far from us all injustice, iniquity, avarice, disputes, spirit of bitterness, deceit, false reports, evil speaking, hatred of God, pride, and boasting, vain glory, want of hospitality, . . . not only doing these things, but applauding those who do them."

Clement, Bishop of Rome, more than twenty years after the death of Paul, uses his letter to the Romans, which he found in the archives of his church as a true writing of the Apostle, which had authority for him and all Christendom. If

Clement's other quotation from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and expressions which show that he had the Second as well as the First Epistle in his possession.

Clement uses the Epistle to the Romans as genuine.

The confidence of Clement and his church in the Epistle to the Romans must have rested on an immovable foundation.

we think of the profound interest in evangelical truth which was then felt by the church and its leaders, men ready any day to suffer martyrdom for the Gospel, we shall understand that such confidence on the part of Clement and his church in a writing like the Epistle to the Romans, which expounds fundamentally the truths of the Gospel, must have rested upon what they considered an absolutely immovable foundation.

The Epistle of Barnabas.

The second of the writings of which we have spoken is the so-called Epistle of Barnabas. We do not regard it as the work of the well-known companion of St. Paul. It does not bear the name of the author, and presents a conception of Judaism absolutely foreign to what we should conceive to have been regarded as the ideas of the companion of Paul in his work. This

Composed at Alexandria.

Epistle was probably composed at Alexandria, where it was specially well known at the end of the first, or beginning of the second century. It is difficult to believe that the following passage was not borrowed from the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xiii. : "Behold, I have given thee Abraham, as a father to the Gentiles who believed in God, in a state of uncircumcision." Compare Romans iv. 11. The author also applies to himself St. Paul's expression, *filth, offscouring*, in imitation of the Apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 11, 13.

Quotation from the Epistle to the Romans.

These Epistles therefore not only existed at the

end of the first century, but they had been already disseminated; they had been communicated by the churches who received them, to other churches who had asked for them. We know from a passage of Irenæus that the Apostolic Epistles were viewed as the property of the church, and deposited as such in the house of one of the elders.

The Epistles to Romans and Corinthians were already disseminated at the end of the first century

"Every question will be cleared up for him" (the Christian who is in doubt), says this father, in his great work (*Against the Heretics*, iv. 32), "*when he has read attentively the Scriptures, which are kept in the houses of those who are presbyters in the church.*"

To the houses of the elders people had to go for information, and from their houses the Scriptures were fetched when wanted for public worship. Not only were the presbyters or elders, in whose custody the archives of the church were placed, responsible for the safe keeping of the Scriptures, but they also had the power of granting copies to those churches that applied for them. There is a remarkable passage in Tertullian on this point. This father, in writing to the heretic Marcion, who had appropriated the Gospel of Luke, and modified it according to his own ideas, and rejected the three other Gospels, says to him (*Against Marcion*, iv. 5),

The Scriptures deposited in the houses of the elders.

Copies granted by them to applicants.

Tertullian's testimony.

"The same authority in the apostolic churches that acknowledges the Gospel of Luke, is also extended to the other Gospels, those of John, Matthew, and Mark, which we possess through and according to them."¹

¹ Per illas et secundum illas.

What
Tertullian
meant.

Tertullian meant to say that if other churches than those in which the original Gospels were deposited possessed these writings, they only came into their possession through the instrumentality of those churches, and according to originals which were deposited in their archives. We understand from this that the copy of any apostolic writing was made by the church which owned the original, and care was taken that this transcription was done accurately. It is just as if they had added at the close, *Exact copy of the original.*

Rapid
propagation
of the
apostolic
writings.

It was in this manner that the apostolic writings were circulated, each church asking for what it did not possess from the church which had the original. This propagation must have taken place very rapidly, especially with respect to these four Epistles. We have just shown that Clement of Rome possessed, at the close of the first century, not only the Epistle to the Romans, but also those to the Corinthians; that the author of the letter of Barnabas in Alexandria possessed those to the Romans and Corinthians. We conclude also, from similar quotations, that Ignatius in Asia Minor, at the commencement of the second century, had in his hands the Epistle to the Romans and the First to the Corinthians; that Polycarp at the same time used the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, quotes at length the

At the
beginning of
the second
century
Ignatius had
the Epistles
to the
Romans and
Corinthians
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possession,
and
Polycarp
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Romans,
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and
Galatians.

passage Rom. iii. 11-17; the passage 1 Cor. v. 8 of the 1st Corinthians, and probably Gal. iii. 10 and iv. 12. We must not view these quotations as indicating the date of the publication of these writings. They are made to a certain extent accidentally, and were occasioned by the contents of the works which contain them; they presuppose the existence and authority of the apostolic books from which they are taken.

Contemporaneously with Justin, about A.D. 140, the gnostic Marcion taught at Rome a system according to which there would have been absolute disagreement between the Old and New Testaments. There were, according to him, two Gods, one inferior, who had created the material world and given the Law to the Jews; the other superior, the God of the Gospel revealed in Jesus Christ, who is all love, while the first knows nothing but justice. In order to support this system, he chose from among the apostolic writings received by the churches, a certain number of books which seemed to him to favour his theses, but from which he was obliged to excise many things that did not agree with his ideas. These books were the Gospel according to Luke, which he greatly mutilated, and ten of St. Paul's Epistles. These were, according to Tertullian and Epiphanius, the four chief Epistles, to the Galatians, the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans; also the two Epistles to the

Justin Martyr's quotations in the middle of the second century.

Marcion's system.

The Apostolic writings which he appealed to.

The four chief Epistles, etc.

The
order
adopted
by Marcion
chronological.

The
deeply
rooted
conviction in
Christendom
of the
Apostolic
origin of
these
writings.

Without
this basis
Marcion's
work would
have been a
failure.

The
Peschito.

The
disputed
Epistles
a part of it.

Thessalonians, the Epistles to the Laodiceans (our Epistle to the Ephesians¹), to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Philippians. It is evident that this order, especially of the four first, was determined from the chronological point of view. That was the canon that Marcion had instituted in his numerous churches. This fact is of great importance, for it shows how deeply rooted the conviction of the apostolic origin of these writings was in Christendom. Marcion knew that without this basis, which he retained in common with the church at large, his work would be a failure.

Soon after the middle of the second century, we can establish three facts, which prove the diffusion of St. Paul's Epistles and the authority with which they were received even in the most remote churches in the world. A translation of the apostolic writings into the Syriac language, the *Peschito*, was published at this time at the eastern extremity of the church. It was not a private work; it was a translation destined to form the official canon of the Syrian churches. The four Epistles we are considering form a part of it. In the West a

¹ The grounds for believing this Epistle to be wrongly described as addressed to the Ephesians are external and internal. The weight of MS. authority is against the genuineness of the words "at Ephesus" in the first verse. The fact that the Apostle addresses those to whom he wrote as unknown to him, and does not particularise any persons, seems to be against the Ephesian destination of the Epistle.

Latin translation, that which is generally called *Itala*, appeared at the same time, and a similar fact was reproduced at the opposite extremity of the church. Our four Epistles occupy the place of honour in these collections of the Apostolic writings.

The *Itala* contains these four Epistles.

Then we possess a very important document found by the savant Muratori in the Library of Milan, where it is still deposited. It dates from about the year A.D. 160 or 170, and was probably composed in the name of one of the Western churches, which wished to instruct others, touching the Apostolic writings to be read in public worship. In it they are distinguished from other Christian writings which were not entitled to this honour. After having spoken of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the author goes on to say:—

The Muratorian Canon.

“As to the Epistles of Paul, they speak for themselves to those who are willing to understand, as to what place they were sent, and for what purpose they were written. Paul especially forbade the Corinthians to indulge in the schism of heresy; the Galatians to practice circumcision; he expounded to the Romans the plan of the Scriptures, showing them how Christ is the beginning and end of them,” etc.

Reference to these Epistles.

Then follows the complete list of St. Paul's Epistles. Thus we see that there was not the least doubt either in the East or West as to the Apostolic origin of these Epistles.

Complete list of St. Paul's Epistles.

We pass over many authors who wrote at this period (second half of the second century), such as Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, who all use the

Method of
quotation in
Irenæus.

The same
method
adopted
by Clement
of
Alexandria,
and
Tertullian.

The
discussion
as to the
authorship
of the
Epistle to
the Hebrews
shows that
the Church
was alive to
the
importance
of critical
questions.

four chief Epistles, and we confine ourselves to mentioning the three great doctors, who lived in the second and third centuries, Irenæus, in Gaul; Clement of Alexandria, in Egypt; Tertullian, in Western Africa. Up to this time Christian writers had quoted the Apostolic writings, without indicating the title and the author. Henceforth, they adopt, so to speak, a more exact method, they indicate by name the authors, and the sacred writings from which they derive their testimony. Thus Irenæus says, "This is what St. Paul says, writing to the Romans" or, "In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of," or, "For the Apostle in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians," or, "And again in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul thus speaks." We find the two great contemporaries of Irenæus also quoting expressly and textually.

Thus from one end of the church to the other, a perfect unanimity of sentiment prevailed with respect to the writings we are considering; there was not the whisper of a suspicion about them. And yet we must not suppose that the conscience of the church was slumbering or that the church was lacking in critical faculty. The controversy that existed between the East and the West as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, proves how the Church and its teachers had their eyes open upon questions which concerned their faith.

IV.

MORAL CONSIDERATIONS.

EACH of the four Epistles that we are considering is prefaced by an address in which Paul is designated by name as its author. And not only so, but in all of them frequent allusion is made to the person of the author as the founder of the Church addressed and the Apostle of the Gentiles. Thus, in the Romans, the writer begins by explaining the reasons why he had not yet been to Rome, the capital of the heathen world, to preach the gospel to them. In ch. ix. 1-3, x. 1, he expresses his profound grief, his distress, and his incessant prayers on behalf of the children of Israel; in xi. 1, he gives himself as an example to prove that Israel has not been entirely rejected, because he, an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, had been made partaker of the Divine salvation. At the end of the Epistle he speaks of his intention to go into Spain, and of his expected arrival in Rome; and, in his greeting to Aquila and Priscilla, he recalls how they were willing to lay down their lives for his sake. In recommending Phoebe, the bearer of the letter to them, he mentions with gratitude the care she had taken of him personally. If the letter had been by an impostor, not only

The personality of Paul in the Epistles.

The Epistle to the Romans.

The expression of his feelings.

His expectations.

His gratitude.

would Paul's name at the beginning of the address have been a forgery, but there would have been a refinement of fraud extending through the whole letter.

The Epistles
to the
Corinthians.

His
foundation
of the
Church.

His reasons
for not
accepting
support
from the
Church.

His
testimony.

His labours.

It is the same with the two Epistles to the Corinthians, in which the author identifies himself all through with St. Paul. It was he who baptised the first converts at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 14-16. When he had founded the church, it had been in fear and trembling (ii. 3). "I have planted," says he, "Apollos watered" (iii. 6). If the Corinthians had ten thousand instructors, he alone was their father in Christ (iv. 15). Some of them were puffed up, as though he would not come to them; but, said he, "I will come shortly" (iv. 18, 19). If it had depended on him, he would have all men to be like himself (vii. 7). He explains at length the reasons why, in concert with Barnabas, he had refused to be supported as the other apostles had been by the churches which he had founded. He praised the church for having kept the ordinances as they had been delivered by him to them (xi. 2). He had transmitted to the Corinthian church the main facts in the life of our Saviour, and he himself had beheld the last appearance of the risen Saviour (xv. 1-8). He, unworthy to be an apostle, had laboured more abundantly than they all (xv. 9, 10). Then he announced his intention of paying them a visit

when he passed through Macedonia, and he described the joy he felt at meeting with the three delegates of the church, whom he specified by name (ch. xvi.)

The Second Epistle is the most personal, if we may so speak, of all the letters of the Apostle. His recent emotions of grief and joy, of fear and hope, his dangers, his deliverances, his love to the church, his sufferings, his consuming labours, the accusations against his character, his explanations of his conduct, his approaching arrival in Corinth, the severity he would display towards the vicious and rebellious, the whole contents of this Epistle,—each verse shows that the letter was written by the Apostle's own hand.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians the most personal.

The letter written by the Apostle's own hand.

It is the same with the Epistle to the Galatians. Although teaching occupies a proportionately larger place, the personality of St. Paul is constantly apparent. In the first chapter, he speaks of his past life as a Jew; of his conversion through the revelation of the risen Saviour; of the teaching by which he had received from the Saviour *his gospel*; of his sojourn in Arabia, and his return to Damascus; of his first visit to Jerusalem, and the fifteen days he passed in the house of Peter. In the second chapter, he gives an account of his conference with James, Peter, and John, at the conclusion of which these pillars of the Church recognised his apostleship, and ratified his method of

The personality of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Contents of first and second chapters.

Fourth and
sixth
chapters.

If Paul
were not
the author
the Epistle
must have
been forged.

The
impression
of the
writer's
integrity
derived from
the Epistle
incompatible
with the idea
of fraud.

preaching the Gospel to the heathen, without imposing the Mosaic law on them; then narrates his personal contest with Peter at Antioch. In the fourth chapter we have the touching accounts of his first sojourn in Galatia, how, when, detained by a painful malady, he was the object of their love, and was received by them as if he had been the Lord himself; in the sixth chapter we find the allusion that he makes to having written the letter *with his own hand* (v. 11), as well as to the marks of the Lord Jesus which he bore in his body (v. 17). If all these had not been dictated or written by Paul himself, we must admit that they are only the more or less skilful inventions of a forger, who, after the death of Paul, had personated the Apostle and narrated the various events of the Apostle's life, real or imaginary, as having occurred to himself, in order to induce the churches to receive the things he sought to inculcate. But when we calmly meditate on all these writings, and reflect on all the details contained in them, we immediately feel that we are in the presence of a man who is speaking with all the solemnity that a human soul is capable of, and with the most incorruptible integrity. This moral character, which obtrudes itself upon us, is absolutely incompatible with the innumerable frauds which we must impute to the author, on the supposition that he was not St. Paul himself.

Besides, this impossible supposition involves other improbabilities. How can we suppose that after the death of St. Paul, any Christian author whatever would have thought of attributing to his pen chapter vii. of the 2nd Corinthians, in which the Apostle expresses the lively regret he felt at first for the very severe letter he himself had written to the Corinthians, and the feeling of relief he afterwards experienced at seeing the salutary effects it had produced? How can we believe that in the same Epistle a forger would attribute to the Apostle the authorship of two whole chapters (ch. viii. and ix.) to induce the Corinthians to take part in a collection for the benefit of the poor saints at Jerusalem, which would imply that the church was still in existence there, which was not the case, for two or three years before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians had retired to Pella, on the other side of Jordan? How can we believe that a forger after Paul's death, could have invented out of his own head all sorts of accusations against the Apostle, to give himself the trouble to refute them in his name? How can we suppose that in the First Corinthians he would devote the whole of one chapter to explaining the reasons why he declined to use his right to being supported by the churches. How can we imagine that a serious writer, such as the author of these Epistles may be supposed to have been, would mention by name,

Other improbabilities involved in the supposition of non-Pauline authorship.

With reference to the Apostle's regret at the severity of the letter he had written to the Corinthians.

With reference to the collection.

With reference to accusations against the Apostle.

With reference to his support by the churches.

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With
reference to
his names
of several
persons.

With
reference to
the gift of
tongues.

Difficulties
involved
in the
supposition
that the
Epistles
were
written in
the second
century.

What the
man who
composed
them at that
time must
have been.

Chloe, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Stephanas, Phoebe, Tertius, if these were not the names of real persons? What interest would there have been to those living in the second century—for that was the time to which the recent school of Loman has relegated the composition of these four letters—in the long dissertation (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.) about the gift of tongues, at a time when there was no longer such a gift in the Church, when it had entirely given place to prophecy and instruction, as it appears from the writing, "*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*," recently discovered, from the writings of Justin Martyr, and in general from the writings of the second century. But how can we believe in the appearance at that time of writings so fresh, so original, so powerful, so genial, so life-like as these four Epistles, when the creative activity of the early times had given place to the simple reproduction of the apostolic ideas, and when the purity of evangelical doctrine had been corrupted by a mixture of legality, as we see from all the leaders of the Church at this period, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Papias? The man who could have composed them at such a time would have shone in the ecclesiastical firmament as a star of the first magnitude, and eclipsed by his brilliancy all contemporary writers, and yet we are to believe that he himself remained unknown!

To meet all these moral improbabilities, the few

scholars who have contested the authenticity of the Epistles in question, have only one suggestion to offer which has a shade of plausibility in it. They pretend that primitive Christianity, having originated on Jewish soil, could not have been put in opposition to Judaism at so early a date; and consequently that these Epistles of Paul, which show this opposition to Judaism, must have been composed very much later, when Hellenism had already acquired a powerful influence in the Church. But what would result from this argument? We should be constrained to declare the controversy of Jesus with the Pharisees to be false, to cease to attribute to our Lord such parables as the old garment and the piece of new cloth, of the vine-dresser and others which accentuate the contrast between the Gospel and the legal economy; to treat the death of Christ as a fable, for it is the blood-stained monument of the rupture between the Old Judaism and the New Dispensation. If we look a little closer into it, we shall see that it is the severe attitude of Jesus towards the religion of His time, which cleared the way for the polemics of Paul against Pharisaism and its sophistical interpretation of the law; and if we study the question yet more profoundly, we shall perceive that this strife of Jesus and St. Paul against the false Judaism of their time, was only the continuation of the struggle of the ancient prophets with the legal formalism of

The only plausible explanation of the difficulties involved.

The consequences of this argument

The relation of the severity of Jesus to the polemics of Paul against Pharisaism.

The
eternal
conflict
between
a living
spiritual
life and
religious
materialism.

their own contemporaries. We find over again in this history of the secular conflict between the prophets and Jesus and the Apostles, on the one hand, and the Jewish nation on the other, the symptoms of the eternal conflict between a living spiritual life which seeks after God, and religious materialism which is at the service of Egoism. There is, therefore, no anachronism in placing the composition of these four Epistles at the time in which the Apostle Paul lived.

The
decision of
sceptical
critics on
the authen-
ticity of
these
Epistles.

These reasons are so decisive that the most sceptical critics express themselves with the utmost decision as to the authenticity of these four Epistles.

De Wette.

This is what De Wette says, in his *Introduction* to the Books of the New Testament (123a) :—

"The letters of Paul bear the marks of his powerful genius. The most important of them are raised above all contradiction as to their authenticity ; they form the solid kernel of the Book of the New Testament."—1845 (2, 1866).

Baur.

Baur says, in his *Apostle Paul*, (i. 8) :—

"Not only has no suspicion of the authenticity of these Epistles ever arisen, but they bear so incontestably the seal of the originality of Paul, that one cannot comprehend for what reason critics could raise any objection to them."

Holtzmann.

Holtzmann (*Einleit. in's N. T.* p. 224) :—

"These four Epistles are the Pauline *Homologoumena* (books universally received) in the modern acceptance of the word. We can realise, with respect to them, the proof of authenticity undertaken by Paley against the freethinkers of his time."

Weizsäcker (*Apost. Zeitalter*, 1886, p. 190):— Weizsäcker.

"The letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians are, without doubt, from the hand of the Apostle; from his hand also came incontestably the Epistle to the Romans."

Lastly, M. Renan, in *The Gospels*, p. 40 and Renan.
41, thus expresses himself:—

"The Epistles of Paul have an unequalled advantage in this history—that is, their absolute authenticity. No serious doubt has ever been raised of the authenticity of the Epistle to the Galatians, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Romans."

In his book entitled *St. Paul* (p. 5), the same writer arranges the Epistles attributed to this Apostle into five classes—1st, the incontestible and uncontested Epistles (our four Epistles); 2nd, the certain Epistles, although some objections have been raised to them (First and Second to the Thesalonians and Philippians); 3rd, the Epistles of probable authenticity, although there are grave objections to them (Colossians, Philemon); 4th, one doubtful Epistle (Ephesians); 5th, false Epistles (First and Second Timothy, Titus). Renan's classification of the Epistles

We see that, in the eyes of this thoroughly sceptical author, to attach any suspicion to the four Epistles which we are considering is a rational and moral impossibility.

Those who fix the date of these Epistles either at the end of the first century, or in the course of the second, have to decide between two alternatives—either they must attribute the four writings to one

The impossibility of suspecting the authorship of the four principal Epistles of St. Paul.

The alternatives.

The
difficulty
in either
case.

The style
of these
Epistles.

The
difficulties
of suppos-
ing them to
be forgeries
insuper-
able.

and the same forger, or they must impute them to several. In either case they meet with a great difficulty in the fact of the perfectly original and creative style which characterises these Epistles. This style is like the mirror of a powerful individuality; it is concise, fearless, bold, indicating by one word a whole world of ideas, abounding in paradoxical antitheses, arousing the attention by unexpected questions, illustrating the thought by comparisons which are always equivalent to reasons, frequently passing from the most affectionate outbursts to the most biting sarcasm, employing, without a shade of art, all the resources of art; in a word, completely inimitable. Can any one ascribe to one and the same forger these incomparable writings, which Christian antiquity always attributed to St. Paul? By attributing these four masterpieces to one and the same man, we make the existence of such an anonymous man of genius in the Church which succeeded the Apostles so much more incomprehensible, and on the other hand, if we attribute them to four different authors, we are obliged to augment the number of writers who have had the rare ability of writing in the same original and inimitable and yet perfectly characteristic style.

V.

CONCLUSION.

WE have just shown that the work of Jesus was historically continued in that of St. Paul in Israel. Before concluding let us reverse the course, and try to retrace our steps from the work of Paul, and especially from the contents of these four Epistles, to the appearance of Jesus on the earth.

The Apostle wrote about a quarter of a century after the death of the Saviour. What did the Church of that period think of Him in whom it professed to believe? We can gather it from the Epistles of the Apostle, especially where he recalls certain facts in the life of Jesus as known to his readers, and admitted by them. No doubt,—and it has often been remarked,—he does not give very much detail of the history of Jesus in his letters. One reason is, his writings presuppose among his readers the knowledge of the Gospel history, a knowledge upon which the churches were founded. Another is, Paul, not having himself accompanied with the Lord, had no personal reminiscences of the Saviour's life to communicate. But the historic events that we find recalled in these Epistles are sufficient, and by piecing them together, we can to some extent reconstruct the life of Jesus as portrayed for us in the Gospels.

St. Paul's work the continuation of the work of Jesus.

The date of the Epistles.

What the Church thought of Christ at the time.

Not much detail of Christ's history given in the Epistles.

The pre-supposition of the Pauline Epistles.

Paul not a companion of the Lord.

The life of Jesus in these Epistles.

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The pre-
existence
of Jesus.

Jesus existed prior to his Incarnation as Creator of all things (1 Cor. viii. 6). He was divine, and guided Israel in the desert (1 Cor. x. 6).

Truly man.

He emptied Himself of all these divine riches, and became poor for our sakes (2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6, 7). He was truly man, born of a woman (Rom. v. 15; Gal. iv. 4). He was born a Jew, and descended from the family of David (Rom. i. 3). He was under the Law, and faithfully kept it (Gal. iv. 4; Rom. xv. 8).

Under
the law.

Without sin.

He was without sin (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3). He submitted patiently to a life of opprobrium (Rom. xv. 3). He was meek and gentle (2 Cor. x. 1). He died to manifest the justice of God, and to show us what true justice is by bearing our curse (Rom. iii. 25; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13).

The object
of His
death.

His burial
and re-
surrection.

He was really buried (1 Cor. xv. 4). He was raised again the third day by the power of God (1 Cor. xv. 4; Rom. vi. 4).

His
appearances
after His
resurrection.

He appeared to Peter, to the twelve, to an assembly of five hundred persons, to James (1 Cor. xv. 5-7), and in the last place to Paul himself (ver. 8).

His
glorification
and
intercession.

He was invested with the sovereignty of the whole universe of the dead and of the living (Rom. xiv. 8, 9). He lives glorified in heaven in a spiritual body (1 Cor. xv. 42-48). He intercedes for the Church (Rom. viii. 34).

When the hour comes, he will reappear as King

(1 Cor. xv. 23; Rom. xiii. 11-14). He will raise up his people, and give them a body like His own (1 Cor. xv. 23, 48, 49).

His coming again and the resurrection of His people.

He will establish a divine kingdom by beating down all God's enemies, even death itself (1 Cor. xv. 24, 26; Rom. viii. 18-28). He will raise all the dead (1 Cor. xv. 22). All men shall appear before His throne to give account (Rom. xv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10).

How He will establish His kingdom.

At the head of the family of the elect, made like unto Himself, He will glorify God the Father (1 Cor. xv. 28; Rom. viii. 29).

His glorifying of the Father.

He is for all, as the source of salvation and life, what Adam was as the source of sin and death; the Second and last Head of humanity (Rom. v. 12, 21; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45-49).

The source of salvation and life.

The plan of the Eternal God in favour of man is thus fulfilled in Him (Rom. viii. 29, 30; 1 Cor. ii. 7).

The plan of God fulfilled in Him.

That is what the Church thought of Christ twenty-seven years after His death; that is what was thought of Him at an earlier period still—for Paul did not give these facts concerning the life of Jesus, as his own discovery, but as that which he himself had received (1 Cor. xv. 3). That which he especially calls *his gospel* bears on one particular point, the free gift and the universality of salvation. His knowledge of the historical person of Christ in the past, and of His coming in the future, he shared

Paul had received these facts.

The peculiarity of Paul's Gospel.

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The Gospel
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to all the
Apostles.

in common with the other apostles (1 Cor. xv. 3, 11). In this general sense, the Gospel is not his own, but that of the twelve. It is not a mere legend, it is the Gospel proclaimed at and after Pentecost.

What Christ
must have
been judging
from the
impression
He
made and
the
testimony
of Paul.

What must not He have been, who, after two years and a half of public ministry and intercourse with His own, in parting from them, left on their minds such an impression, such an image of His person! What must not He have been, to have obtained, so soon after His death, from the most desperate of His adversaries, such a testimony as we find in these four Epistles!



EVIDENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

FROM THE FOUR GREATER EPISTLES

OF

ST. PAUL.

BY THE

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Argument of the Tract.

THE concession of Baur, Renan, and others, respecting the authenticity of these four Epistles taken as the starting-point of the argument. Nothing is assumed regarding the authority of other parts of the New Testament.

I. In these four Epistles we have CHRISTIANITY AS A SYSTEM, including facts, doctrines, and institutions; (1) *Facts*: the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ; importance of noting the manner in which these two subjects are mentioned; (2) *Doctrines*: the conspicuous position assigned to faith; the doctrine of redemption; instruction regarding the Holy Ghost. (3) *Institutions*: Baptism; the Supper of the Lord; the Christian Ministry; the observance of Sunday. All this tends to bind naturally together these Epistles with the rest of the New Testament. (4) A similar conclusion drawn from the mention of *Persons*: St. Peter in these Epistles and in other parts of Scripture; value of the general confidence inspired by the Christianity of these Four Epistles.

II. In these Epistles we have ST. PAUL'S PERSONALITY. Strong characteristics of his personality here and in other parts of the New Testament. (1) Claim of an *independent and direct call to the apostleship*. This is consistent with what we read elsewhere. (2) His own testimony here to his former *persecution of the Christians*. (3) Unity of St. Paul's character; his *unwearied* energy. (4) His *quick sympathy and tact*; varied illustrations of this feature. Thus again these four accepted Epistles are seen bound by a strong chain with St. Paul's other Epistles, and with the Acts of the Apostles.

III. MINUTE, YET INDEPENDENT, HARMONY OF THESE EPISTLES WITH DETAILS IN THE BOOK OF THE ACTS. (1) St. Paul's habit of *working with his own hands*. This fact appears both in these letters and elsewhere; moral lessons drawn here and elsewhere from this habit. (2) Notices of *Aquila and Priscilla*; these notices are consistent everywhere, yet without any suspicion of contrivance. (3) The *collection for the poor Christians in Judaea*; illustration thus furnished of St. Paul's habit of philanthropy. (4) Evidence supplied by the mention of *places*; example, in that of *Damascus*, as named in two of these Epistles; strict harmony of this with what we find in two of St. Paul's speeches. This kind of argument would tell forcibly in a court of justice. It does not put in jeopardy any other part of Christian Evidence.

EVIDENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

FROM THE FOUR GREATER EPISTLES

OF

ST. PAUL.



IN the wide waste of waters which modern criticism believes itself to have spread over the firm and fruitful ground of Divine Revelation there stands an island, the solid foundation and clear surface of which are not questioned. This is the portion of the New Testament which consists of the Epistles written to *the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Romans*. These documents are viewed by the most advanced of the critics as authentic, and as having been really written by St. Paul in the course of his third missionary journey. The words of M. Renan may be taken as sufficing to justify the assertion of this fact. He speaks of these four Epistles as "incontestables et incontestées" (indisputable and undisputed); and he adds, "les critiques les plus sévères, tels que Christien Baur, les acceptent sans objection."¹ (The most severe critics, such as Christian Baur, accept them without

The four
Epistles un-
questioned
by criticism.

Renan's
testimony.

¹ *Saint Paul*, pp. v. vi.

objection.) It is from this concession, as its starting-point, that the following short course of reasoning proceeds.

The purpose
of this
Tract.

I propose, in these few pages, simply to take this conceded fact, coupling it with another fact which cannot be denied—namely, that a Book called the Acts of the Apostles exists, as well as the four Gospels and the other Epistles—and to suggest some conclusions which seem to me to be easily and naturally reached from this point of departure. I take into my hand these four unquestioned Epistles, and I place beside them the Book of the Acts, without assuming anything as to its date or the circumstances of its first appearance. I shall merely submit certain parts of it to critical internal examination as I proceed. So with other parts of the New Testament, the Gospels and the remainder of the Epistles. They, to some extent, will be dealt with in the same manner. But, as will be seen, there are special reasons, in this case, for careful attention to the Acts of the Apostles.

I.

Christianity
as a system
found in the
undisputed
Epistles.

Now, in the first place, we have in these four Epistles *Christianity as a system*. If all the rest of the New Testament were vanished and gone, still we should have this fact to deal with; and it is a difficult fact to deal with, except on the sup-

position that Christianity is a revelation from Heaven.

Can only be accounted for as a Divine revelation.

The best way to justify this statement is to read through the four Epistles under consideration, with this thought in the mind; and this I have done, so as to have the case fresh and correct before me. I have tried to feel as if it were a new subject. It is not a bad exercise, even for a firmly-believing Christian. To one who does not believe, this simple task may be recommended as worthy of an experiment.

In speaking of Christianity as a system I include, of course, facts, doctrines, and institutions; and these three sides of the subject may be taken in turn. It may not be easy to draw lines of absolute separation among them. Christian doctrines are implied in Christian institutions; and there must be ascertained facts to give value to both. But for the purposes of the present argument it is enough to draw the distinction approximately; and we may consider facts, doctrines, and institutions separately.

What is included in Christianity as a system.

1. As to *facts* implied in these Epistles there is no doubt that they point, in the most remarkable manner, to JESUS CHRIST, and centre there. Such a person as JESUS CHRIST must have existed; and within very near limits of time before the writing of these letters: and if we have an account of Him which seems to fit all the references to Him con-

The facts implied in these Epistles.

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tained in these documents, such an account at least demands an instant and most careful attention. The letters are so remarkable and surprising, that the interest they excite immediately communicates an interest to what seems to be collateral and explanatory. They require an evangelical background; and the evangelical background which we possess exactly meets the case. Why is it not to be accepted?

The Davidic
origin of
Christ.

Among minor facts, the following are worthy of attention. In the Epistle to the Romans it is said that Jesus Christ was "made of the seed of David."¹ This is a fact upon which some considerable stress is laid in the Gospels, as also in the Acts.² In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians it is said that He was "poor";³ and this fact too is very prominent in the Evangelic history.⁴ Nor is it credible that these representations of Christ in that history—that He was a descendant of David, and that He lived a life of poverty—can have been introduced there, in the midst of a tissue of varied incidents, in order to produce a correspondence with the four documents before us. The mention of the reading of the Mosaic Scriptures in the synagogues, which we find in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians,⁵ is

The reading
of Moses
in the
synagogue.

¹ Rom. i. 3.

² Matt. xii. 23; John vii. 42; Acts ii. 30; xiii. 23. See 2 Tim. ii. 8.

³ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁴ Matt. viii. 20.

⁵ 2 Cor. iii. 15.

not without its value for this argument, when we compare it with the actual notices of such reading of the Old Testament, in the lives of Jesus and His Apostles,¹ and with what James is recorded to have said at the Apostolic Council: "Moses hath of old time them that preach Him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day."² This very person James might be used as a link of connection incidentally (and therefore persuasively) furnished between the Epistle to the Galatians on the one side, and the Gospels and Acts on the other. In the Epistle he appears in companionship with Peter and John, as a "pillar" of the Church conjointly with them;³ and the Gospels place him with them in the catalogue of chosen Apostles.⁴ This scene too is at Jerusalem, the place where the Acts represent him as occupying a prominent local responsibility.⁵

But especially we must mark those two great facts concerning Christ—His *Crucifixion* and His *Resurrection*—and the manner of the appearance of these facts in the Epistles under our attention. As to these two literal occurrences, "the preaching of the cross"⁶ had been St. Paul's main point at Corinth. He goes so far as to say that he had "determined to know nothing among the

The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

¹ Luke iv. 16, 17; Acts xvii. 1-3.

² Gal. ii. 9.

³ Matt. x. 2.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 18.

⁵ Acts xv. 21.

⁶ Acts xv. 13.

Christ
crucified by
the princes
of this
world.

The
testimony
of the First
Epistle to
the Corin-
thians to the
resurrec-
tion.

Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."¹ So, in regard to Galatia, his appeal to his converts there is, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"² Nor ought we to omit the mention of a point of detail, which appears quite incidentally in one of these letters. It is noted that Christ was crucified by "the princes of this world,"³ a circumstance which exactly describes the action of Pontius Pilate, as the representative of the Roman Power, while yet it is as remote as possible from any semblance of imitation in the construction of the Gospel. And as with the Crucifixion, so with the co-ordinate fact of the Resurrection. If it is "Christ that died," who is the great subject of St. Paul's teaching, it is "rather," as he says in the Epistle to the Romans, "Christ that is risen again."⁴ It is especially in the First Epistle to the Corinthians that the Resurrection of Christ is asserted, with extreme force, as a literal occurrence. The fact had been denied at Corinth, and the refutation of this denial supplies to us at once a link of great value with the Gospel history.⁵

It is not necessary here to give minute attention to the reconciliation of the instances of Christ's

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

² Gal. iii. 1.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 8.

⁴ Rom. viii. 34.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 3-8, 15.

appearances after the Resurrection, with the instances given in the Gospels and the Acts. My point is simply this, that it is Christ as risen from the dead who is the subject of St. Paul's teaching in these Epistles, just as it is Christ as risen from the dead who concludes the Evangelic histories. The doctrinal and moral uses to which these great facts—the Crucifixion and the Resurrection are applied—belong rather to the next paragraph than to this; yet they may just be mentioned here. In such passages as the following: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:" "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" "If we be dead with Christ we shall also live with Him:" "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" "Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God; for we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you"¹—the very allegorical use of the facts shows how deeply the facts had penetrated into the innermost convictions of the writer,—while, to view the matter on another side, such passages are in entire harmony with the same writer's language in the other Epistles attributed to him. *Two instances only need be given: one where he

The doctrinal and moral uses of the crucifixion and resurrection.

¹ Gal. v. 24; ii. 20; Rom. vi. 8; vi. 11; 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

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says to the Philippians that he earnestly desires "that he may know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"¹—the other, where he says to the Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."²

The
doctrines
contained
in the
Epistles.

2. As to the *doctrines* which attract our attention in these four Epistles, there is no doubt that they present Christianity to us, under certain aspects, as a very remarkable religion. And first we note the extraordinary importance assigned in it to *faith*.

The
importance
assigned to
faith.

A broad statement of the case is the following: "In the Gospel of Christ is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith."³ A still stronger statement is the following: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justificth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;"⁴ and the same doctrine is equally conspicuous elsewhere within the narrow range of the documents before us: "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.—Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.—We through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."⁵ This presentation of a new religious system is certainly, as has been said,

¹ Phil. iii. 10.

⁴ Rom. iv. 5.

² Col. iii. 1.

⁵ Gal. iii. 9, 26; v. 5.

³ Rom. i. 17.

remarkable; and this is to be observed, that it is in strict harmony with the place assigned to faith in Christ's own teaching, and in the account of His miracles, as given to us in the Gospels. The sayings of our Lord to the Syro-Phœnician suppliant, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt;"¹ and to another who approached Him, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole;"² to the disciples, "If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done; and all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive;"³ and again, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them,"⁴—these sayings are quite as strong as anything of the kind which we find in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians; and in character and meaning they are very similar to the passages which have been quoted from these Epistles. The same argument might be presented in another form in connection with the subject of justification, and what St. Paul writes concerning it in these Epistles might be set side by side with what he is alleged to have said concerning it to the Jews at the Pisidian Antioch: "By Christ all that believe are justi-

In harmony with Christ's own teachings.

The Syro-Phœnician woman.

Promises to the disciples.

Faith and justification.

¹ Matt. xv. 28.

² Matt. xxi. 22.

³ Matt. ix. 22

⁴ Mark xi. 24.

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Redemption.

fied from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."¹ But, to turn to another doctrine, which likewise is very prominent in these four Epistles, and which might be expressed in one word as the doctrine of *redemption*, St. Paul says, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that Christ, while placed toward us in other spiritual relations also, is "made unto us redemption."² In the same Epistle he says more pointedly, and more than once, that we are "bought with a price."³ In the Epistle to the Galatians he says that Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world;" and that He "redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us."⁴ These are most remarkable phrases; but they correspond in doctrine with what we find in other parts of the New Testament—notably in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the First Epistle of St. John, and in the Book of Revelation. And if one more instance is to be adduced for the sake of giving something like completeness to the representation of the characteristic doctrine of these four Epistles, it might be what it taught there concerning *the power of the Holy Ghost*. In this "sending down of the Holy Ghost from heaven"⁵

The power
of the Holy
Ghost.

¹ Acts xiii. 39.² 1 Cor. i. 30.³ *Ibid.* vi. 20; vii. 23.⁴ Gal. iii. 13.⁵ 1 Peter i. 12.

we have in truth both a fact and a doctrine. In the Gospels this sending is exhibited as the most conspicuous promise of the Saviour; in the early part of the Acts the first fulfilment of the promise is recorded; and such passages as those which we find in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the fifth of that to the Galatians, are such as might be expected from such a root and such a flower.

3. But Christianity, besides the facts on which it rests, and besides the doctrines which it teaches, has *institutions* which it prescribes, and by which it is continuously supported. Primarily, of course, we must have reference here to the two Sacraments—to Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Their definite appointment in the Gospel-time, and their observance, as a matter of course, in the early Apostolic time, need only be stated. These facts lie on the surface of the two great historic parts of the New Testament. But the observance and high spiritual meaning of these two ceremonies lie embedded in these four Epistles, which form the occasion of the present argument, so that the harmony between the epistolary and narrative exhibitions of Christianity in this respect, is complete, while yet it is quite natural and unaffected. In the Epistle to the Romans we read, "Know ye not that so many of us

Institutions.

The Sacraments.

Spiritual significance of baptism.

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as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death; therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death."¹ In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"² and again, "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."³ In the Epistle to the Galatians we read, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."⁴ And if an allegorical application, as some may deem it, is in certain of such passages made of the act of Baptism, this rather enhances the value of the connection which we are tracing, for we see here a living religion rising high above mere ceremony. The notices of the other sacrament are less diffused through this group of Epistles; in fact, they are concentrated in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. But they are there concentrated with so much force, that they are riveted, so to speak, upon the Gospel-history. In the literal account that is given of the founding of the Lord's Supper there is so much resemblance to the account supplied in the Gospel according to St. Luke,⁵ that it is very difficult not to believe that there was some personal communication on this subject between these two writers. And the indications of such a personal com-

The
Lord's
Supper.

St. Luke's
and St.
Paul's
accounts
of the
institution
of it.

¹ Rom. vi. 3.

² 1 Cor. i. 13.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

⁴ Gal. iii. 27.

⁵ Luke xxii. 17-21.

munication are in themselves manifestly of some evidential value. And here again, as in the case of the other great Christian ordinance, if we find a great religious principle associated with it, as in such words as "we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of one bread,"¹ this binds together for us the literal founding of Christianity described to us in one part of Scripture, with the reality of a living religion, as exhibited to us in another part.

The religious principle associated with it.

As to the existence of appointed ministrations in the Church which these letters depict, it is remarkable that the most definite phraseology on the subject relates to the ministry of women. Phœbe is named as a "deacon" of the Church at Cenchrea.² In fact, she is the only person in the New Testament whose name is associated with this title.³ It is, however, worth noticing, as a curious coincidence, that this tallies very well with the philanthropic aspect of the origin of the Christian Ministry, as exhibited in the Acts.⁴ But

Ministry in the Church.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 17

² Rom. xvi. 1.

³ Stephen and his six companions (Acts vi. 5) are not called Deacons; and the Deacons of Phil. i. 1 and 1 Tim. (iii. 8-13) are merely mentioned in general terms. In 1 Tim. iii. 11, the Revised Version gives the correct meaning, and shows that women-deacons or deaconesses are intended.

⁴ The necessities of philanthropy (Acts vi. 1) give the occasion to the diaconate of Stephen and the others; and it is in connection with philanthropy (Acts xi. 30) that the presbyters of the Christian Church are first mentioned.

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as to the existence of a stated ministry in the Church, the broad general principle enunciated in the First Epistle to the Corinthians is decisive: "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the Temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."¹ This, by the hypothesis, belongs to a comparatively early period of St. Paul's apostolic life; and if it is somewhat general, whereas, at a later period of that life, in the Epistle to the Philippians,² and, later still, in the Pastoral Epistles,³ this subject appears in a more mature form,—in this, to say the least, there is no inconsistency. Again, in these four Epistles, as elsewhere, the corporate life of the Church, the exercise of discipline, the assembling together for public worship, are assumed. And, to end this slight notice of institutions, there is in one of these letters a naming of "the first day of the week," which reminds us of the same phrase in the Gospels and the Acts, and almost inevitably carries us on to the thought of the religious observance of Sunday.⁴

The
corporate
life and
discipline of
the Church.

Observance
of Sunday.

4. Thus, tested by allusions to facts, by statements

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 14.

² Phil. i. 1.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 8-13.

⁴ 1 Cor. xvi. 2. See Matt. xxviii. 1; Acts xx. 7.

of doctrine, and by the expressed or implied existence of institutions, does this small group of Epistles hold out a hand in one direction, so as intimately to grasp the Gospels; while with like intimacy they hold out another hand to grasp the remaining Epistles attributed to the same writer. But another part of the same connection ought at least just to be touched. This is the evidence supplied by reference to *persons*. If the Evangelical history is true, it was by living agents that the Gospel was to be spread through the world; and some of the living agents are named: and among them the most conspicuous is St. Peter. Now, references to Peter are found in the Epistles before us. If it were not so, there would be the appearance of a dissidence and wide separation between the Christianity of these Epistles and the Christianity of the Gospels and the Acts. But, as the case stands, this personal link of connection is quite real, while perfectly casual and incidental. In giving to the Galatians an account of his early Christian life, St. Paul, while asserting in the strongest way his independent apostleship, says that he eagerly desired to make Peter's acquaintance. "I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."¹ What could be more natural? How could it have been otherwise if St. Paul's experience had been what it is de-

References
to persons.

St. Peter.

St. Paul's
visit to him.

¹ Gal. i. 18.

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Party spirit
at Corinth.

scribed to have been in the early part of the Acts, and if St. Peter had been what he is said in the Gospels to have been? And he supplies another very unexpected, yet very cogent, instance of affinity between this Epistle and the Gospel history. Peter, with his old impulsiveness, fell into a sudden inconsistency, so as actually to imperil the true religious standing of many of his fellow-Christians, and so that a public expostulation and rebuke became necessary on the part of St. Paul.¹ That happened once more at Antioch, which had happened on the Sea of Tiberias² and in the house of the High Priest at Jerusalem.³ Yet who could be so perverse as to say that there is here any ingenious invention of identity of character for the sake of procuring credit to documents not really authentic? As regards certain circumstances recorded in this Epistle as having happened at Jerusalem, the position of St. Peter in respect of them exactly corresponds with his position on the same occasion as narrated in the Acts, while yet with some incidental difficulties on the surface, which require explanation, and therefore prove independence of narration. And to add one other reference to the same disciple in this group of Epistles, we find that when party spirit ran high at Corinth, the head of one party was Paul, and the head of

¹ Gal. ii. 11.

² Matt. xiv. 30.

³ Matt. xxvi. 69, 70.

another party was Peter.¹ This is just what might have been expected. The refutation of this party spirit is in the comprehensive assertion: "Whether it be Paul or Peter, all are yours."² But if Peter was what he is elsewhere recorded to have been, it is most natural that human passion and prejudice should have placed him in this position. And to end this section of the subject by referring to the statement which another part of the First Epistle to the Corinthians contains of an appearance to Peter after the Resurrection,³ this exactly corresponds with what we read in the Gospel of St. Luke.⁴ Probably it may be a reminiscence of those early conversations between St. Peter and St. Paul.

The appearance of the risen Saviour to St. Peter.

On the whole it seems very clear that when we hold firmly what we have in these four Epistles, we find that we have in our hands something very solid and strong, from which we can follow, link by link, chains which conduct us into other parts of the New Testament, with the conviction that all are connected together by consistency and mutual understanding,—that the same general character belongs to the whole, that, having confidence in these four Epistles, we must diffuse our confidence further. Having accepted our starting-point, we cannot stop there. We are in possession of more

Conclusion from the above argument.

¹ 1 Cor. i. 12.

² 1 Cor. xv. 5.

³ Gal. iii. 22.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 34.

—we are in possession of all—if we are in possession of this.

And there is another way of looking at the matter, not different from the former, but appealing with almost greater persuasiveness to our feelings and our conscience. Having in these Epistles Christianity fresh in view before us, as a divine religion, “we have confidence towards God.”¹ We are sure that He will not deceive us. This religion is not merely a system of doctrines and institutions, with historic facts as its basis, and historic personages to propagate it, but it is a revelation of God’s character. We follow on where He leads us through the other parts of the Gospel Scriptures. The inundation of doubt, which may have seemed to overspread some parts of them, tends to disappear. “The waters are dried up from off the earth: behold, the face of the ground is dry.”²

Christianity
a revelation
of God’s
character.

II.

ANOTHER broad view of the subject before us is connected with *the personality of St. Paul*. In reading these four Epistles, even if we knew nothing of the documentary and historical environment from which we cannot separate them, we should be startled by the features of character

The
personality
of St. Paul.

¹ 1 John iii. 21.

² Gen. viii. 13.

indicated in these four documents, and by the definite manner in which they set before our view a most extraordinary person. His enthusiasm, his aggressive missionary zeal, his devotion to that Master, real or imaginary, whom he has been led to serve, are palpable. And are we not justified in saying, parenthetically, that it is very difficult to conceive of such literal devotion to a Master whose claims are imaginary? Equally palpable, too, are the writer's strong sense, his vehement logic, and his alternation between tender sympathy and indignant expostulation. On the whole, it is a most complicated, yet most natural personality, which these letters force us to contemplate. And now let us observe that it is precisely the same character which comes to view on reading the other Epistles attributed to St. Paul, and the treatise which is called the Acts of the Apostles: and, at all events, those letters and this treatise exist. If the opinion which has hitherto been generally accepted is true, that the same man did write the other letters, and that the Book of the Acts is an honest, trustworthy document, then everything is easy, all the phenomena are explained. But then it is to be observed that this implies a diffusion of confidence in regard to these other books. If we accept what we find in these four Epistles, we are constrained to follow a conclusion which ranges over a much wider surface. But we

Most complicated and yet most natural

The same character appears alike in the Epistles and the Acts

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must not be content with this general setting forth of the argument at this point. The topic before us deserves to be handled in detail.

St. Paul's
calling to
the apostle-
ship.

1. In three of these selected Epistles, St. Paul lays the utmost stress upon his separate direct "*calling*" to the apostleship. In fact it is, in each of these three, his starting-point. In writing to the Romans he says that he was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God," that by Christ he has "received grace and apostleship;"¹ he begins his first letter to the Corinthians by saying that he is "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ;"² and in addressing the Galatians he is even more emphatic and exclusive in his language: he is an apostle "neither of men nor by man;" he neither "received the Gospel of man," nor was he so "taught" it, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."³ If we believe him, we are face to face with a Divine communication. If not, we must doubt either his veracity or his sanity; and it seems very difficult to reconcile either doubt with the impression we derive from the reading of these four Epistles.

Direct from
God.

Accounts
of his
conversion.

But the point immediately under consideration is this, that the assertion of a direct calling and revelation to himself personally is in strict and natural harmony with what we find in the Acts of the Apostles. Three times in that book is

¹ Rom. i. 1, 5.

² 1 Cor. i. 1.

³ Gal. i. 1, 12.

his sudden conversion related with emphasis and in detail: and not only must our attention be given to the facts which are alleged to have taken place on the way to Damascus; but in the vision which Ananias is said to have seen in that city it is expressly said that Paul was "a chosen vessel" to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles;"¹ while not at Damascus only, but at Jerusalem also, soon afterwards, in a vision of St. Paul himself, this direct calling was, according to his own account, reiterated. "Depart, for I will send thee far away to the Gentiles."² Thus a most momentous part of St. Paul's personal history is set before us in perfect harmony by these four Epistles, and by the historical narrative. And the same argument may be extended to other Epistles which bear the name of St. Paul. This consciousness of a direct personal call for work among the Gentiles is evident throughout these writings. Thus, in writing to the Ephesians of this Gospel with which he was commissioned, he says: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power."³

Visions of
Ananias and
St. Paul.

St. Paul's
conscious-
ness of a
direct per-
sonal call.

2. In writing to the Galatians St. Paul says: "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I per-

His previous
life.

¹ Acts ix. 15.

² *Ibid.* xvii. 21.

³ Eph. iii. 7.

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secuted the church of God and wasted it."¹ And similar language, though arising out of a totally different context, is found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God: but by the grace of God I am what I am."² The same earnest, penitent, sorrowful remembrance of this part of his personal history is found elsewhere, outside the limits of his third group of four Epistles. Thus, in the letter to the Philippians, he says that, "as regards zeal" in Judaism, if a proof of that were wanting he had been "a persecutor of the church,"³ while in another letter of a different date he recurs with the utmost depth of feeling to this part of his life: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious."⁴ We find precisely the same habit of reference to this subject in speeches given in the Acts of the Apostles. He says to the mob of Jews in the Temple Court, that "being zealous, as they all were that day," he says that he had "persecuted" the Christians "unto death," binding and delivering into prison not only men but "women;"⁵ and he tells before Festus and Agrippa how he had "shut

¹ Gal. i. 13.

² 1 Cor. xv. 9.

³ Phil. iii. 6.

⁴ 1 Tim. i. 13.

⁵ Acts xxii. 19.

up many in prison ;" how he "had compelled them to blaspheme;" how, "being exceedingly mad against them, he had persecuted them unto strange cities." ¹ Nothing could be in closer correspondence with the language used in the Epistle to the Galatians; nor could anything be in closer correspondence with the facts of the case as recorded in the earlier part of the Book of the Acts. It is evidently the same personality of St. Paul which we meet in all these cases.

The same personality in the Acts and the Epistles.

3. This zealous, vehement, untiring persecution, in obedience to a misguided conscience, may in itself be viewed as indicating a part of *the personal character* of St. Paul: and, to pass now from facts of his experience to features of his temperament, we may first take one which is closely allied to what has just now been before us. This is *his unwearyed energy and laborious activity*. That this was a feature of his character no one can doubt, who takes his impression from the four Epistles which are the groundwork of this inquiry. He is all eagerness to visit Rome.² After he has been there, he hopes to go to Spain. Meanwhile he is going on an important errand to Jerusalem. "All round about unto Illyricum he has fully preached the Gospel of Christ."³ His impatient eagerness at Troas, when Titus failed to come to him with news from Macedonia, is evidently

St. Paul's energy and activity.

His impatient eagerness.

¹ Acts xxvi. 11.

² Rom. i. 11; xv. 32.

³ *Ibid.* xv. 10.

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His abundant labours.

characteristic.¹ The manner in which he speaks of having been detained by illness in Galatia seems to express the same kind of feeling.² The astonishing account of his labours in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians³ bears upon it all the marks of truth, so that he is fully justified in the statement he makes in the First Epistle, that "he laboured more abundantly than they all;"⁴ adding, however, (and the addition carries with it a world of evidence as to the reality of the Gospel which he bore,) "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

His incessant journeyings.

Now put side by side with this the impression we derive, as to this particular point, from the Acts of the Apostles; and is it not quite evident that we have the same man before us? His incessant travelling from place to place, his vehement labour wherever he stayed, are in exact harmony with the statement in the second letter to the Corinthians, though it is quite evident that that passage was not at all in the historian's thoughts when he wrote the treatise. No reference is made here to correspondence of persons, places, and circumstances—a subject which belongs to a later part of the argument—but rather to indications of a certain tone of mind.

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 13.

² Gal. iv. 13. "*Decause of infirmity*" is the correct translation.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

"Immediately," he says, on recounting what took place at Damascus, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."¹ So, on another occasion, when summoned by a Divine communication to go into Europe: "*Immediately* we endeavoured to go into Macedonia."² So, again, on arriving in Rome, whatever the fatigues of the voyage and journey had been, whatever his infirmity of health, we find him "after three days" calling the Jews together that he might argue with them on behalf of the Gospel.³ His rising up from a state of insensibility at Lystra, after stoning, and proceeding "the next day" to Derbe, bespeak alacrity and courage;⁴ while the same impatience, demanding some strong discipline, which we have observed in the Epistles, seems evident in what we read concerning the approach to the *Ægean* from the interior: "when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not: and they passing by Mysia came down to Troas."⁵ That the same energetic, active, laborious character is presented to us throughout the range of the Epistles, which besides these four, are attributed to St. Paul, will

His alacrity and courage.

The same character appears in all the Epistles.

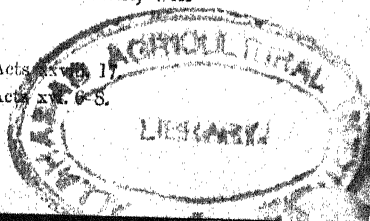
¹ Acts xxvi. 19.

² *Ibid.* xvi. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.* xiv. 20.

³ Acts xviii. 19.

⁵ Acts xv. 2-8.



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hardly be denied.¹ We might sum up the whole case of agreement by a phrase which he uses alike in his speech to the Ephesian elders, and in his two letters to the Thessalonians, when he speaks of his labours of various kinds as continued "*night and day*."²

His tact.

His sympathetic nature.

His craving for sympathy.

4. We may now pass from St. Paul's unwearied industry, to *his quick sympathy, his tenderness, his tact*. The very contrast has in it an element of persuasiveness. It is in the combination of two very opposite qualities that we recognize especially the personality of St. Paul. His tact is visible in his praising the Corinthians before he blames them: his sympathy in the deep feeling with which he welcomes the offender on his repentance.³ But the sympathetic nature of the Apostle is made manifest in other ways, and in ways which, because less direct, are the more important for our purpose. He craves for the sympathy of others. Thus put together what he says of the "temptation" in his flesh, when writing to the Galatians, and of the "thorn in the flesh" when writing to the Corinthians.⁴ There is no doubt that these two expressions refer to the same subject; and in each case he so names it as to

¹ Niemeyer says truly, in his *Charakteristik der Bibel* (i. p. 215), "Paulus ist überall der geschäftig arbeitende Mann."

² 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

³ 2 Cor. ii. 6-8.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 7; Gal. iv. 14.

make a demand on the considerate care and feeling of those to whom he writes. The same habit of character, if such an expression may be allowed, is evident near the end of the Epistle to the Romans. He is about to go to Jerusalem with alms carefully collected in various places for the poor Christians in Judæa; but his heart is full of fear. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed."¹ It is the more important to dwell carefully on this passage, because we can connect it, by manifest signs of identity of feeling, with that part of the historic narrative to which other circumstances show that it belongs. There is a most evident shade of melancholy upon this part of St. Paul's biography, as we trace him on his return voyage from Corinth, whence he wrote this Epistle, to Jerusalem, where he was arrested by the Roman soldiers. At Miletus he has the sad foreboding of "bonds and afflictions;"² the sorrowful feeling and deep craving for sympathy with which he addresses there the Ephesian

His fears.

His melancholy.

His forebodings.

¹ Rom. xv. 30-32.

² Acts xx. 23.

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elders cannot be mistaken. And our impression of the scene is deepened as we read of what took place at the close of it. "When he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all: and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that he should see their face no more"¹ From Ephesus the vessel went to Tyre; and there a description of a similar scene is given. They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down and prayed. "And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again."² Thence they went to Ptolemais, and next day to Cæsarea, where he is again warned of impending danger, and the disciples do their best to hinder him from going to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased," writes St. Luke, "saying, The will of the Lord be done."³ All this should be carefully put side by side with the passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Romans: for it combines with it in elucidating one side of St. Paul's character.

His perseverance at
all hazards.

¹ Acts xx. 36-38.

² Acts xxi. 5, 6.

³ *Ibid.* xxi. 13, 14.

There is strict correspondence: yet evidently no imitation. It is the same side of character as that which is shown in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "I wrote to you with many tears—Ye are in our hearts to live and die with you."¹ And yet it is perhaps in personal friendship and in small particulars that sympathy makes itself most evident. In the last-named Epistle St. Paul's personal feeling towards Titus is very similar to his personal feeling towards Epaphroditus, as manifested in the letter to the Philippians.² And, to conclude what is brought forward under this head, the whole tone of that Epistle, as also of the Epistle to the Galatians, receives an illustration from two sentences in the narrative of the Acts, which are seen to be full of meaning when looked at in this connection. The first is at the moment of leaving the Syrian coast: "The next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself."³ The second is on the high road in Italy, when the prisoners were approaching Rome: "The brethren came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, whom, when

Correspondence without imitation between the Acts and Romans.

Personal friendship of St. Paul.

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 4; vii. 3. This point is summed up, with great force and beauty, by Adolphe Monod, in a sermon entitled "Les Larmes de Saint Paul," in his *Saint Paul*. I may perhaps also be allowed here to refer to the *Hulsean Lectures* for 1860 (third edition).

² 2 Cor. ii. 13.

³ Acts xxvii. 3.

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Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."¹ In order to see all that is reflected, on these two occasions, in the language of St. Luke, "the beloved physician,"² we must take into account St. Paul's delicate health, his privation and imprisonment, his discouragements and his fatigue.

The feelings
resulting
from a
survey of
these four
Epistles.

Is it not quite evident that when we thus range over these four Epistles in companionship, so to speak, with their acknowledged author, we become conscious that we are not on an island, with the barren sea around us but on a table-land, from whence we can survey a wide and fruitful country, both near to us and far off? And not only so. Is it not quite evident that this table-land is, so to speak, organically connected by strong continuous ridges, and by rich opening valleys, with the wide country that is so suggestive of admiration and contentment?

III.

BUT independently of the general argument which resides in the identity of St. Paul's character, as presented to us by these four acknowledged Epistles, and those other parts of the New Testament which for the moment are supposed to be under suspicion, there is the *comparison in various points of detail* between these four documents and that part of the Acts of the Apostles.

Argument
from
detailed
comparison
with the
Acts of the
Apostles.

¹ *Ibid.* xxviii. 15.

² Col. iv. 14.

which relates to the period of his life during which he wrote them. In this way of stating the question there is nothing illogical. The narrative of the Acts is here only hypothetically assumed to be true. If it turns out, on a close comparison, that the narrative, without being forced, fits the Epistles so that notices of facts and persons and places fall into order easily, while yet it is evident that the narrative and the Epistles are independent sources of information, then the hypothesis becomes an argument. It comes to us with its hand full of strong evidence. The key that fits the lock is probably the right key. The confidence inspired by the four letters tends to spread itself over this part, at least, of the apostolic history. But let us see how the matter stands in detail.

1. In the account of St. Paul's first arrival at Corinth, on his second journey, it is said that he met with Aquila and Priscilla, and that "because he was of the same craft he abode with them and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers."¹ And at a subsequent part of the history, when he has summoned the presbyters of Ephesus to an interview at Miletus, there is a very dramatic allusion to the same subject. He holds up his hands while speaking, and says, "Ye yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered

St. Paul's trade as a tent-maker.

His appeal to the elders of Ephesus.

¹ Acts xviii 3.

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Allusions
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unto my necessities, and to them that were with me: I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak."¹ The mere comparison of these two passages ought to tend to give us confidence in the Book of the Acts. They are in the most natural, yet the most curious, harmony with one another. What St. Paul had done at Corinth, he had done at Ephesus. There is a consistency in this which is quite worthy of notice. And, further, in the one case this habit of St. Paul is mentioned merely as a fact in the course of the history: in the other it is named by himself, in a serious address, for the purpose of drawing from it a moral lesson. The unaffected naturalness of this should be observed.

Now the point before us is the reappearance of this fact of St. Paul's biography in our four Epistles, and in the manner of its appearance. They belong by the hypothesis to the same general period of his life. In writing from Ephesus the First Epistle to the Corinthians (and every circumstance fits the supposition of this place and date), he says: "Even unto this present hour I labour, working with my own hands."² Those who read the letter at Corinth had known him to be thus engaged, and they would feel the force of the appeal involved in the words "unto this present hour," even as the presbyters of Ephesus would feel the force.

¹ Acts xx. 34, 35.

² 1 Cor. iv. 12.

of the phrase "these hands." Yet the wildest imagination could hardly suggest that one of these passages was invented to fit the other.

But the comparison here instituted along the line of this habit of St. Paul's life carries us further. In another part of the same Epistle he virtually asserts that he might have "forborne working" with his own hands, that "the Lord has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" but he had resolved not to use this power, that he might secure the additional influence arising through "making the gospel of Christ without charge."¹ Thus, as at Miletus, he draws a moral lesson from this habit of his life.

Why he worked with his own hands.

Reason given to the elders of Ephesus.

Nor is this the only instance of the same kind in the Epistles attributed to this Apostle. This discussion cannot be pursued without turning first in one direction and then in another; and wherever we turn we gather new evidence to confirm our faith. Writing to the Thessalonians he says: "Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God;"² and again in the second letter: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample

In his Epistle to the Thessalonians.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 18.

² 1 Thess. ii. 9.

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unto you to follow us."¹ Thus what he had practised at Corinth and at Ephesus, he had practised likewise at Thessalonica, the third great mercantile city of the Ægean Sea. And not only so, but in each of these cases, in writing to Corinth, in writing to Thessalonica, in speaking at Miletus, he uses the same fact of his life to point a moral lesson. Yet can any one say that these notices have been, in the slightest degree, borrowed from one another? Surely no fair mind can deny that, starting from the point taken in the uncontroverted Epistles, and following these paths through the Acts of the Apostles, and through Epistles outside the accepted group, we have found reasons for extending our confidence to those other parts of the New Testament.

Notices of
Aquila and
Priscilla.

At Ephesus.

2. The transition from this subject to the notices of *Aquila and Priscilla* in our group of Epistles is easy and natural.² These notices are two. In the first letter to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus, we find the following passage: "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

² This is only a specimen of the evidence that might be supplied by reference to persons. Thus Apollos might be brought forward as a very conclusive link between the Acts and our four Epistles. In 1 Cor. iii. 6 we find it said, "I have planted, Apollos watered." This exactly, yet most artlessly, corresponds with what we learn from the Acts. Paul was first at Corinth, and then Apollos: and Apollos went to Corinth before the writing of this letter

that is in their house."¹ In the letter to the Romans we find the passage: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my sake laid down their necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: likewise greet the church that is in their house."² In the one case we see these two friends of the Apostle in Ephesus, in the other we see them in Rome: the two places are widely separated; yet these two Epistles are assumed to have been written during the same Missionary Journey. At first sight this appears like a discrepancy. This appearance, however, soon dissolves into nothing upon careful examination. In the Acts it is said that the acquaintance was first formed at Corinth, under the following circumstances, before the close of the Second Missionary Journey: "at Corinth Paul found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome), and came unto them; and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent-makers."³ Next, on leaving Corinth and touching at Ephesus, he "left them there;"⁴ and there they were eminently useful in the instruction of Apollos, before he pro-

At Rome.

Apparent discrepancy.

Explanation.

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

² Rom. xvi. 3, 4.

³ See above, p. 33.

⁴ Acts xviii. 19.

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ceeded to Corinth. All this is in most easy harmony with what we read in the first letter to the Corinthians, both as to the fact that St. Paul finds them at Ephesus, on his entering upon the Third Missionary Journey; and also as to their utility to the Church and their friendly relations with Corinth. Yet it would be very difficult for even the most suspicious critic to contend that all this was suggested by the passage in the letter, and ingeniously interwoven into the narrative of the Acts, in order to procure credit to that document.

Time for
them to
have
reached
Rome.

And now as to our finding these two Christians in Rome, to which place another letter is written during the same journey, there really is no difficulty whatever in this. Adopting the usual calculations, for which the materials are ample, we find there was abundant time for Aquila and Priscilla to have reached Rome before the letter was written to that place from Corinth. It may be added that such voyages would be very natural for Jews engaged in trade; while the strong language in the Epistle to the Romans, concerning the devotedness, the utility, and hospitality of these two persons, and their friendship towards himself, is in harmony with all that we read in the Acts. It must be added that there is one more notice of them in the New Testament. In the Second Epistle to Timothy, which, if genuine, was the latest that the Apostle wrote,

Reference
to them in
the 2nd
Epistle to
Timothy.

we find this: "Salute Prisca and Aquila."¹ Timothy seems then to have been at Ephesus; and all that need be said on this point is that they should be once more in this mercantile city, and that St. Paul's friendship towards them should continue to the end, is perfectly natural. On the whole it seems altogether reasonable to contend that such biographical threads justify our disposition to combine together St. Paul's Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles in one general conviction of trustworthiness.

3. But we may now turn to a subject of a totally different kind, with the view of ascertaining the probable relation of these three Epistles to the historic narrative. It is impossible to read these three Epistles without perceiving how strongly pervaded St. Paul was, at the time of writing them, with the anxious interest of a certain collection he was promoting for the poor Christians in Judaea. The facts of the case and his feeling on the subject are summed up in the following sentence of the Epistle to the Romans:

"Now I am going unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints: for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints that are in Jerusalem."² If we examine the letters to the Corinthians, we see a very large space given to this

The collection for the poor saints in Judaea.

References to it in the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians.

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 19.

² Rom. xv. 25, 26.

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Two chapters on the subject in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians.

Not noticed in the history of this part of St. Paul's life in the Acts.

An argument for the independence of the Book.

subject, with the expression of much importunity. From the first of these letters it appears that he had been doing in Galatia, in regard to this collection, what he had been doing in Macedonia and Achaia; and moreover that the most systematic arrangements were made for the completion of the "gatherings" at Corinth, and the conveying of them to Jerusalem.¹ If we turn to the Second Epistle, we find two whole chapters given to this subject with great earnestness of feeling.² Now, at first sight it might be thought very strange that a subject which engrossed St. Paul's attention and emotion so much during his sojourn in Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia should not be named in the direct narrative. A considerable space is devoted in the Book of the Acts to details of what occurred in this particular part of St. Paul's life; yet no mention is made there of the active business of this collection, which was certainly going on then. Now, we may say with confidence that there would have been some mention of the subject if this part of the narrative had been intentionally and ingeniously constructed, so as to fit what we find in the Epistles. Hence we have in this fact an argument for the independence of the Book of the Acts. But if we read on beyond this part of it to the account of what took place in Judæa, after St. Paul had been apprehended

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4

² 2 Cor. viii., ix.

in the Temple at Jerusalem, and was on his trial at Caesarea, we find quite casually and unexpectedly, yet quite naturally, this business on which St. Paul was at this period so intent, coming to view. He says before Felix, regarding the errand on which he had been brought to Jerusalem:

Incidentally referred to at a later period.

"Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings."¹ This is a sudden note of inner harmony between the two classes of documents that are before us, which is of the utmost value to us in estimating their authenticity.

In his speech before Felix.

And there is a wider view of the subject, which ought by no means to be omitted, for it strengthens the argument considerably. This is not the only place in the Acts of the Apostles where we find St. Paul actively interested in the benevolent collecting of money for the poor in Judæa. At a much earlier period (at the end of the eleventh chapter, and at the end of the twelfth) he is represented to us as busily engaged in the same way. Taking the evidence that is before us, we might almost say that this was one of the enthusiasms of his life. And the very same thing comes to view in the fourth of that group of Epistles, of which three have been already adduced in connection with this topic. After the account in the Epistle to the Galatians of the conference at Jerusalem regarding the necessity of circum-

An earlier collection.

One of the enthusiasms of his life.

¹ Acts xxiv. 17.

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cision for Gentile converts, and after the statement of the general agreement regarding the division of spiritual labour between St. Peter and St. Paul, it is added: "Only they would that we should remember the poor, *the same which I also was forward to do.*"¹ Thus there emerges here also, quite naturally and unexpectedly, from the context a proof alike of the necessitous condition of the Christians in Judæa, and of St. Paul's industrious alacrity to procure for them relief.

References
to places.

4. The same kind of argument which arises out of an observation of persons and circumstances, can be drawn likewise from the mention of *places*. All other instances being set on one side, an illustration may be given from the manner in which *Damascus* is named, both in two of the Epistles before us, and in the Book of the Acts; that Damascus should have been indelibly impressed on St. Paul's mind, that every circumstance of his approach to that city, of his experience within it, of his flight from its walls, should have remained vivid in his memory ever after is absolutely certain, if the story related in the ninth chapter of this book is true. Thus, in the stories related in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth chapters, we are not surprised to find the reiterated naming of Damascus in St. Paul's two speeches. When he is addressing the Hebrew mob, under circumstances of great ex-

Damascus.

¹ Gal. ii. 10.

citement, he says, "I went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound to Jerusalem;" and he proceeds, "As I came nigh unto Damascus, suddenly there shone a great light round about me." and presently afterwards, "being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."¹

His conversion near Damascus.

So, when he is speaking before Festus and Agrippa, he says, "As I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday I saw a light from heaven;" and when he has described "the heavenly vision," and said that he was "not disobedient to it," he adds that first "unto them of Damascus" he showed the necessity of repentance and of "works meet for repentance."²

His references to it in his speech before Festus and Agrippa.

All this reiteration of the name of the place is true to nature and to the facts of the story. It is not at all necessary to his argument. If he had been on the way to Alexandria or to Antioch, when the vision from heaven led to his conversion, the result as to persuasion and conviction would have been the same. But the whole local scene on the south of the wall of Damascus was indelibly impressed on his memory. And now we may add, that what we find in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Galatians is equally true to nature and to the facts which he so vividly remembered. "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas, the king, kept the city of the Damas-

In the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians.

¹ Acts xxii. 6, 10, 11.

² *Ibid.* xvi.

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cenēs with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.”¹ The agreement of this account of his escape with the account given of the same transaction in the Acts, while yet “it is related with such difference of circumstances as renders it utterly improbable that one should be derived from the other” has been noted by Paley;² and to what he says this might be added that there is no mention whatever of Aretas in the Acts. But the points to which the reader’s attention is here asked is this, that St. Paul’s quick feeling and memory regarding this subject are manifest. Damascus was impressed upon his recollection as no other place in the world had been. And a similar remark may be made of the manner of the allusion to the same city in the nearly contemporary Epistle to the Galatians. He is speaking of his call to the apostleship, and he says: “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”³ We might remark on the exact, yet evidently undesigned, connection of this with what is stated in the direct narrative: “Straightway” at Damascus “he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God,” and with his

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 32.

² *Horæ Paulinæ*, No. ii.

³ Gal. i. 17.

statement before Agrippa, that at once he began his preaching first in that city.¹ But the point before us is the instinctive feeling with which he names Damascus. He has not stated above that it was there that he had been converted, and that it was thence he had gone to Arabia. With a mind full of the recollection, he simply says that he "returned to Damascus." Possibly he had told to the Galatians, when he was among them, the story of his Conversion. Indeed we can hardly doubt that he had done so. But this only makes what we find here to appear the more natural; and, just to add one thing which tends to rescue the narrative of the Acts at this point from any semblance of imitation, the visit to Arabia is not mentioned there at all, as it certainly would have been in an attempt to obtain credit by correspondence with the Epistle.

Its incidental and natural character.

Only specimens have been taken from a solid mass of evidence, which might be exhibited in many particulars. But enough has been written to show that, when travelling carefully through these four Epistles and looking well around us, we find paths diverging on this side and that, along which we might move without any interruption, so as to traverse the whole of the New Testament, and to perceive that it is a continuous region, with all the parts happily related to one another.

The relation and continuity of all parts of the New Testament.

¹ Acts ix. 20; xxvi. 20.

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The force
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As regards the topic on which we have been last engaged, the comparative examination of these four Epistles, on the one hand, and the history of the Acts on the other, coalesce into an argument, the force of which it is very difficult to resist. It is precisely the kind of evidence which tells very forcibly in a court of justice. Let us imagine ourselves in such a court, with four authentic letters, concerning which no doubt is entertained. The question is regarding the trustworthiness of a continuous narrative dealing with the same subjects, incidents, and persons. Is it not evident that such circumstances as those which have just been named, would weigh very powerfully with a jury, and would probably secure a favourable verdict? One very interesting fact in Paley's life is that he was always fond of observing circumstantial evidence. When he was a young man, he spent much of his time in attending trials, and showed the greatest eagerness and patience in watching the fate of prisoners; and all through life he displayed marked cleverness in weighing evidence, and a great love of that kind of pointed investigation which is required in the cross-examination of witnesses. We have the result in the *Horæ Paulineæ*, a book which is of infinite value, and which never can be obsolete.

One remark, which has been justly made

regarding that book, may be fairly claimed likewise on behalf of this unpretending Tract which must now draw to its end. Whatever evidential argument it contains, all other Christian evidence remains intact. It sometimes happens that a position in apologetics depends upon the securing of some other position first, and that when one part of the defensive ground is lost, other parts must be surrendered also. Not so here. Whatever confirmations of our faith are derived from prophecy, from miracle, from adaptation to the needs of man, from science, from collateral history, from actual success and human experience,—all these sources of conviction flow freely and unimpaired, whatever be the fate of the argument here set forth.

The independent character of the argument.

I have no desire to exaggerate the importance of this slight endeavour. The great edifice of Christian Evidence is complicated and majestic, and consists of many parts. What is here attempted is only a buttress. Yet a buttress may have its value as a helpful, though subordinate, part of a noble building, and may do something for the support of a structure which is deep and strong in its foundations, and bright with the radiance of heaven on its pinnacles above. Any strength that may be communicated in this way is communicated to the whole; and nothing is to be despised which may help in giving confidence in

The subordinate yet important place of the argument.

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that "great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him—God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." ¹

¹ Heb. ii. 3, 4.



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